

The New Park Street Pulpit.

TO-MORROW.

(2)

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON MONDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 25, 1856, BY THE

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AT MABERLEY CHAPEL, KINGSLAND,

On Behalf of the Metropolitan Benefit Societies' Asylum, Ball's Pond Road,
Islington.

"Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."—
Proverbs xxvii. 1.

God's most holy word was principally written to inform us of the way to heaven, and to guide us in our path through this world, to the realms of eternal life and light. But as if to teach us that God is not careless concerning our doings in the present scene, and that our benevolent Father is not inattentive to our happiness, even in this state, he has furnished us with some excellent and wise maxims, which we may put in practice, not only in spiritual matters, but in temporal affairs also. I have always looked upon the book of Proverbs with pleasure, as being a book not only teaching us the highest spiritual wisdom, but as also more especially speaking on the "now"—the time that is present with us—giving us maxims that will make us wise for this world, and that will instruct us in conducting our affairs whilst we are here amongst our fellow-men. We need some temporal wisdom as well as spiritual illumination; it need not always be that the children of the kingdom should be more foolish than the children of darkness. It is well that we should be wise to order our common affairs aright, as well as to set our house in order for the grave; and hence we find in Scripture maxims and teachings for them both. Since God has been pleased thus to instruct us in the avocations of life, I shall not, then, be out of place, if I use my text, in some degree, in a merely temporal manner, and endeavour to give advice to my friends concerning the business of this life. Afterwards, I shall dwell upon it more spiritually. There is, first, *the abuse of to-morrow*, forbidden in the text; in the second place, I shall mention *the right use of to-morrow*.

I. First, then, there is *THE ABUSE OF TO-MORROW* mentioned in the text; and we shall look upon it first in a worldly point of view, and yet, I trust, in a way of wisdom. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow." Oh! my brethren, whoso'er ye be, whether ye be Christians or no, this passage hath a depth of wisdom in it for you. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow," and this, for many very wise reasons.

First of all, *because it is extremely foolish to boast at all*. Boasting never makes a man any the greater in the esteem of others, nor does it improve the real estate either of his body or soul. Let a man brag as he will, he is none the greater for his bragging; nay, he is the less, for men invariably think the worse of him. Let him boast as much as he pleases of anything that he possesses, he shall not increase its value by his glorying. He cannot multiply his wealth by boasting of it; he cannot increase his pleasures by glorying in them. True, to be content with those pleasures, and feel a complacency in them, may render them very sweet; but not so with such a treasure as this, for it is a treasure which he has not yet, and, therefore, how foolish he is to glory in it! There is an old, old proverb, which I dare not quote here; it is something to do

with chickens. Perhaps you can recollect it; it bears very well upon this text, for to-morrow is a thing that we have not yet obtained, and, therefore, not only if we had it would it be foolish to boast of it, but because we have it not, and may never have it, it becomes the very extremity of foolishness to glory in it. Glory, O man, in the harvest that may come to thee next year when thy seed is sown; but glory not in to-morrow, for thou canst sow no seeds of morrows. Morrows come from God; thou hast no right to glory in them. Glory if thou wilt, O fowler, that the birds have once flown to thy net, for they may come again; but glory not too soon, for they may find another decoy that shall be better to their taste than thine, or they may rove far off from thy snare. Though many a day has come to thee, think not that another will certainly arrive. Days are not like links of a chain; one does not ensure the other. We have one, but we may never see its fellow; each may be the last of its kind. Each springs of a separate birth. There are no twin days. To-day hath no brother, it stands alone, and to-morrow must come alone, and the next and the next, also, must be born into this world without a brother. We must never look upon two days at once, nor expect that a whole herd of days shall be brought forth at one time.

We need not boast of to-morrow, for *it is one of the frailest things in all creation*. and, therefore, the least to be boasted of. Boast of the bubbles on the breaker, boast of the foam upon the sea, boast of the clouds that skim the sky, boast of what thou wilt, O man, but boast not of to-morrow, for it is too unsubstantial. To-morrow, it is a fleeting thing. Thou hast not seen it; why dost thou boast of it? To-morrow, it is the cup which the idiot dreams lieth at the foot of the rainbow. It is not there, nor hath he found it. To-morrow—it is the floating island of Loch Lomond; many have talked of it, but none have seen it. To-morrow—it is the wrecker's beacon, enticing men to the rock of destruction. Boast not thyself of to-morrow; it is the frailest and most brittle thing thou canst imagine. Not glass were half so easily broken as thy to-morrow's joys and thy to-morrow's hopes; a puff of wind shall crush them, while yet they seem not to be full blown. He said, good easy man, full surely my greatness is a ripening, but there came a frost—a killing frost, which nipped his shoot and then he fell. Boast not of to-morrow; thou hast it not. Boast not of to-morrow; thou mayest never have it. Boast not of to-morrow; if thou hadst it, it would deceive thee. Boast not of to-morrow, for to-morrow thou mayest be where morrows will be dreadful things, to tremble at.

Boast not thyself of to-morrow, not only because it is extremely foolish, but *because it is exceedingly hurtful*. Boasting of to-morrow is hurtful to us every way. It is hurtful to us *now*. I never knew a man who was always hoping to do great things in the future, that ever did much in the present. I never knew a man who intended to make a fortune by-and-bye, who ever saved sixpence a week now. I never knew a man who had very great and grand hopes on the death of some old grandmother, or the coming-in of some property from chancery, or the falling to him of something because his name was Jenyns, I never saw them very prosperous in the mean time. I have heard of a man going to be rich to-morrow, and boasting of it; but I never knew him do much. Such men spend so much time in building castles in the air that they have no stones left wherewith to build so much as a cottage on the ground. They were wasting all their energies on to-morrow, consequently they had no time to reap the fields of the present, for they were waiting for the heavy harvests of the future. The heavily laden boats of to-day come in with abundance of fish from the depths of time; but they said of them, "They are nothing; there will be heavier draughts to-morrow; there will be greater abundance then. Go away, little ships; an argosy shall come home to-morrow—a very fleet of wealth;" and so they let to-day's wealth go by, because they expected the greater wealth of to-morrow; therefore, they were hurt even for the present.

And worse than that. *Some men were led into extraordinary extravagance* from their hopes of the future. They spend what they are going to have, or rather what they never will have. Many have been ruined by the idle dream of speculation; and what is that but boasting of to-morrow? They have said, "Truc, I cannot pay for this which I now purchase; but I shall to-morrow, for to-morrow I shall roll in wealth, to-morrow, perhaps, I shall be the richest of men. A lucky turn of business (as they term it) will lift me off this shoal." So they keep still, and not only do they refuse to toil, to push themselves off the sand, but worse than that,

they are throwing themselves away and wasting what they have, in the hope of better times coming in the future. Many a man has been made halt, and lame, and blind, and dumb, in the present, because he hoped to be greater than a man in the future. I always laugh at those who say to me, "Sir, rest a while; you will work all the longer for it. Stay a while, lest you waste your strength, for you may work to-morrow." I bid them remember that such is not the teaching of Scripture, for that says, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," and I would count myself worse than a fool, if I should throw away my to-day's in the expectation of to-morrows, and rest upon the couch of idleness to-day, because I thought the chariot of to-morrow would make up for all my sloth. No, beloved, if we love our God, we shall find enough to do, if we have all our to-morrows, and use all our to-days too. If we serve our God as we ought to serve him, considering what he has done for us, we shall find that we shall have more than our handsfull, let our life be spared as long as Methuselah's—enough for every moment, enough for every hour, long as life may be. But hoping to do things in the future takes away our strength in the present, unnerves our resolution, and unstrings our diligence. Let us take care that we are not hurt in the present by boasting of to-morrow.

And, remember, that if you boast of to-morrow, it will not only hurt you to-day, but *hurt you to-morrow also*. Do you know why? because, as sure as you are alive, you will be disappointed with to-morrow, if you boast of it before it comes. To-morrows would be very good things if you did not give them such a very good character. I believe one of the very worst things a minister can possess is to have anybody to recommend him; for the people say, "Here comes a man, how he will preach, how eloquent he will be!" The poor creature cannot come up to their expectations, and so they are disappointed. So with to-morrow; you give him such flattering encomiums, "Oh! he is everything, he is perfection." To-days—they are nothing; they are the very sweepings of the floor; but to-morrows—they are the solid gold. To-days, they are exhausted mines, and we get little from them; but to-morrows, they are the very mines of wealth. We have only to get them, and we are rich, immensely rich." The to-morrows are everything; and then the to-morrows come laden with mercy and big with blessings of God; but, notwithstanding, we are disappointed, because to-morrow is not what we expected it to be, even when to-morrow is marvellously abundant. But sometimes to-morrow comes with storms, and clouds, and darkness, when we expected it to be full of light and sunshine, and oh, how terrible is our feeling then, from the very reason that we expected something different.

It is not at all a bad beatitude, "Blessed is the man that expecteth nothing, for he shall never be disappointed."

If we knew how to practise that, and expect nothing, we shall not be disappointed, it is certain; and the less we expect, and the less we boast of our expectations, the more happy will the future be; because we shall have far less likelihood of being disappointed. Let us recollect, then, that if we would kill the future, if we would ruin the to-morrows, if we would blast their hopes, if we would take away their honey, we must press them into the hand of boasting, and then we shall have done it. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow;" for thou spoilest the to-morrow by boasting of it.

And then, remember, *what solemnly disastrous circumstances have occurred to men in this life* after to-morrow had gone, from boasting of to-morrows. Aye, there is many a man that set all his hope upon one single thing; and the to-morrow came which he did not expect, perhaps a black and dark to-morrow, and it crushed his hopes to ashes; and how sad he felt afterwards! He was in his nest; he said, "peace, peace, peace," and sudden destruction came upon his happiness and his joy. He had boasted of his to-morrow by over security, and see him there, what a very wreck of a man he is, because he had set his hope on that; now his joy is blasted. Oh! my friends, never boast too much of the to-morrows, because if you do, your disappointment will be tremendous, when you shall find your joys have failed you, and your hopes have passed away. See there that rich man; he has piled heaps on heaps of gold; but now for a desperate venture, he is about to have more than he ever possessed before, and he reckons on that to-morrow. Nothingness is his; and what is his disappointment? because he boasted of imagined wealth. See that man! his ambition is to raise his house, and perpetuate his name; see that heir of his—his joy, his life, his fulness of happiness. A handful of ashes and a coffin are left to the

weeping father. Oh! if he had not boasted too much of the certainty of that son's life, he had not wept so bitterly, after the to-morrow had swept o'er him, with all its blast and mildew of his expectations. See yonder, another, he is famous, he is great; to-morrow comes a slander, and his fame is gone, and his name disgraced. Oh! had he not set his love on that, he had not cared whether men cried, "crucify," or "hallelujah," he had disregarded both alike. But believing that fame was a stable thing, whereas its foot is on the sand, he reckoned on to-morrows; and mark how sad he walks the earth, because to-morrow has brought him nothing but grief. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow."

And I would have you remember just one fact; and that I think to be a very important one; that very often when men boast of to-morrow, and are over confident that they shall live, *they not only entail great sorrow upon themselves, but upon others also.* I have, when preaching, frequently begged of my friends to be quite sure to make their wills, and see to their family affairs. Many are the solemn instances which should urge you to do so. One night a minister happened to say, in the course of his sermon, that he held it to be a Christian duty for every man to have his house set in order, so that if he were taken away, he would know, that as far as possible, every thing would be right. And there was one member of his church there, who said to himself, "What my minister has said is true. I should not like to see my babes and my wife left with nothing, as they must be if I were to die." So he went home. That night he made his will and cleared up his accounts. That night he died! It must have been a joyful thing for the widow, in the midst of her sadness, to find herself amply provided for, and everything in order for her comfort. Good Whitfield said he could not lie down in bed of a night, if he did not know that even his gloves were in their place; for he said he should not like to die with anything in his house out of order. And I would have every Christian very careful, to be so living one day, that if he were never to see another, he might feel that he had done the utmost that he could, not only to provide for himself, but also for those who inherit his name and are dear to him. Perhaps you call this only worldly teaching; very good; you will find it very much like heavenly teaching one of these dark days, if you do not practise it. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow."

II. But now I come to dwell upon this in a *spiritual manner*, for a moment or two. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow." Oh! my beloved friends, never boast of to-morrow with regard to your soul's salvation.

They do so in the first place, *who think that it will be easier for them to repent to-morrow than it is to-day.* Felix said there would be a more convenient season, and then he would again send for Paul, that he might hear him seriously. And many a sinner thinks that just now it is not easy to turn and to repent, but that by-and-bye it will be. Now, is that not a very string of falsehoods? In the first place, is it ever easy for a sinner to turn to God? Must not that be done, at any time, by divine power? And, again, if that be not easy for him *now*, how will it be easier in after life? Will not his sins bind fresh fetters to his soul, so that it will be even more impossible for him to escape from his iron bondage? If he be dead now, will he not be corrupt before he reaches to-morrow? And when to-morrow comes, to which he looks forward as being easier for a resurrection, will not his soul be yet more corrupt; and, therefore, if we may so speak, even further from the possibility of being raised? Oh! sirs, ye say it is easy for ye to repent to-morrow; why, then, not to-day? ye would find the difficulty of it, if you should try it; yea, you would find your own helplessness in that matter. Possibly you dream that on a future day repentance will be more agreeable to your feelings. But how can you suppose that a few hours will make it more pleasant? If it be vinegar to your taste now, it shall be so then; and if ye love your sins now, ye will love them better then; for the force of habit will have confirmed you in your course. Every moment of your lives is driving in another rivet to your eternal state. So far as we can see, it becomes less and less likely (speaking after the manner of men) that the sinner should burst his chains, each sin that he commits; for habit has bound him yet faster to his guilt, and his iniquity has got another hold upon him. Let us take care, then, that we do not boast of to-morrow, by a pretence that it will be so much easier to repent to-morrow; whereas, it is one of Satan's lies, for it will only be the more difficult.

He boasts of to-morrow again, *who supposes that he shall have plenty of time to repent and to return to God.* Oh! there are many who say, "When I come to die, I shall be on my death-bed, and then I shall say, 'Lord, have mercy upon me a sinner.'" I remember an aged minister telling me a story of a man whom he often warned, but who always said to him, "Sir, when I am dying, I shall say, Lord, have mercy on me; and I shall go to heaven as well as any body else." Returning home from his market one night, rather "fou" with liquor, he guided his horse with a leap right over the parapet of a bridge into the river; the last words he was heard to utter were a most fearful imprecation: and in the bed of the river he was found dead, killed by the fall. So it may be with you; you think you will have space for repentance, and it may be that sudden doom will devour you, or, perhaps, even while you are sitting there in the pew, your last moment is running out. There is your hour glass. See! It is running. I marked another grain, just then, and then another fell; it fell so noiselessly, yet methought I heard it fall. Yes! there it is! The clock's tick is the fall of that grain of dust down from your hour-glass. Life is getting shorter every moment with all of you; but with some the sand is almost out; there is not a handful left. A few more grains; see now, they are less—two or three. Oh! in a moment it may be said, "There is not one left." Sinner, never think that thou hast time to spare; thou never hadst, man never had. God says, "Haste thee," when he bids men flee from Sodom. Lot had to haste; and depend upon it, when the Spirit speaks in a man's heart, he doth always bid him haste. Under natural convictions, men are very prone to tarry; but the Spirit of God, when he speaks in the heart of man, always says, "to-day." I never knew a truly anxious soul yet who was willing to put off till to-morrow. When God the Holy Ghost has dealings with a man, they are always immediate dealings. The sinner is impatient to get deliverance; he must have pardon now, he must have present mercy, or else he fears that mercy will come too late to him. Let me beseech you, then (and may God the Holy Spirit grant that my entreaty may become successful in your case!)—let me beseech every one of you to take this into consideration, that there is never time to spare, and that your thought that there is time to spare is an insinuation of Satan; for when the Spirit pleads with man, he pleads with him with demands of immediate attention. "*To-day*, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation."

"Boast not thyself of to-morrow," O sinner, as I doubt not thou art doing in another fashion. "*Boast not thyself of to-morrow*," *in the shape of resolves to do better.* I think I have given up resolutions now; I have enough of the *debris* and the rubbish of my resolutions to build a cathedral with, if they could but be turned into stone. Oh! the broken resolutions, the broken vows, all of us have had! Oh! we have raised castles of resolutions, structures of enormous size, that outvied Babylon itself, in all its majesty. Says one, "I know I shall be better to-morrow; I shall renounce this vice and the other; I shall forsake this lust; I shall give up that darling sin; true I shall not do so now—a little more sleep and a little more slumber; but I know I shall do it to-morrow." Fool! thou knowest not that thou shall see to-morrow. Oh! greater fool, thou oughtest to know, that what thou art not willing to-do to day, thou wilt not be willing to do to-morrow. I believe there are many souls that have been lost by good intentions, which were never carried out. Resolutions strangled at their birth brought on men the guilt of spiritual infanticide; and they have been lost, with resolutions sticking in their mouths. Many a man has gone down to hell with a good resolution on his lip, with a pious resolve in his tongue. Oh! if he had lived another day, he said he would have been so much better, if he had lived another week, oh! then he thought he would begin to pray. Poor soul! if he had been spared another week, he would only have sunk the deeper into sin! but he did not think so, and he went to hell with a choice morsel rolling under his tongue, that he should do better directly, and that he meant to amend by-and-bye. There are many of you present, I dare say, who are making good resolutions—you are apprentices; well you are not going to carry them out till you get to be journeymen; you are journeymen, well, you cannot carry them out till you get to be master. You have been breaking the sabbath; but you intend to leave it off when you are in another situation. You have been accustomed to swear; you say, "I shall not swear any more when I get out of this company, they try my temper so." You have committed this or that petty theft; to-morrow you will renounce it, because to-morrow you will have

enough, and you can afford to do it. But of all the lying things, and there are many things that are deceptive, resolutions for to-morrow are the worst of all. I would not trust one of them; there is nothing stable in them, you might sooner sail to America across the Atlantic on a sere leaf than float to heaven on a resolution.

It is the frailest thing in the world, tossed about on every circumstance, and wrecked with all its precious freight—wrecked to the dismay of the man who ventured his soul in it—wrecked, and wrecked for aye. Take care, my dear hearers, that none of you are reckoning on to-morrows. I remember the strong but solemn words of Jonathan Edwards, where he says, "Sinner, remember, thou art at this moment standing over the mouth of hell upon a single plank, and that plank is rotten; thou art hanging over the jaws of perdition by a solitary rope, and lo! the strands of that rope are creaking—breaking now, and yet thou talkest of to-morrows!" If thou wert sick, man, wouldst thou send for thy physician to-morrow? If thine house were on fire, wouldst thou call "fire" to-morrow? If thou wert robbed in the street on thy road home, wouldst thou cry "stop thief" to-morrow? No, surely; but thou art wiser than that in natural concerns. But man is foolish, oh! too foolish in the things that concern his soul, unless divine and infinite love shall teach him to number his days, that he may apply his heart unto true wisdom, he will still go on boasting of to-morrows, until his soul has been destroyed by them.

Just one hint to the child of God. Ah! my beloved brother or sister, do not, I beseech thee, boast of to-morrow thyself. David did it once; he said, "My mountain standeth firm, I shall never be moved." Do not boast of your to-morrows. You have feathered your nest pretty well; ay, but you may have a thorn in it before the sun has gone down, and you will be glad enough to fly aloft. You are very happy and joyful, but do not say you will always have as much faith as you have now—do not be sure you will always be as blessed. The next cloud that sweeps the skies may drive many of your joys away. Do not say you have been kept hitherto, and you are quite sure you will be preserved from sin to-morrow. Take care of to-morrows. Many Christians go tumbling on without a bit of thought; and then, on a sudden, they tumble down and make a mighty mess of their profession. If they would only look sharp after the to-morrows—if they would only watch their paths instead of star-gazing and boasting about them, their feet would be a great deal surer. True, God's child need not think of to-morrow as regards his soul's eternal security, for that is in the hand of Christ and safe for ever; but as far as his profession, and comfort, and happiness, are concerned, it will well become him to take care his feet every day. Do not get boasting; if you get boasting of to-morrow, you know the Lord's rule is always to send a canker where we put our pride. And so if you boast of to-morrow, you will have a moth in it before long. As sure as ever we glory in our wealth, it becomes cankered, or it takes to itself wings and flies away; and as certainly as we boast of to-morrow, the worm will gnaw its root, as it did Jonah's gourd; and the to-morrow under which we rested shall, with drooping leaves, only stand a monument of our disappointment. Let us take care, Christian brethren, that we do not waste the present time with hopes of to-morrow—that we do not get proud and so off our guard by boasting of what we most assuredly shall be then, as we imagine.

III. And now, in the last place, if to-morrows are not to be boasted of, are they good for nothing? No, blessed be God! There are a great many things we may do with to-morrows. We may not boast of them, but I will tell you what we may do with them if we are the children of God. We may always look forward to them with *patience and confidence*, that they will work together for our good. We may say of the to-morrows, "I do not boast of them, but I am not frightened at them; I would not glory in them, but I will not tremble about them."

"What may be my future lot,
Well I know concerns me not;
This doth set my heart at rest,
What my God appoints is best."

We may be very easy and very comfortable about to-morrow; we may remember that all our times are in his hands, that all events are at his command; and though we know not all the windings of the path of Providence, yet *he* knows them all.

They are all settled in his book, and our times are all ordered by his wisdom; whether they be

"Times of suffering and of grief,
Times of triumph and relief;
Times the tempter's power to prove,
Or times to know his gracious love.
All shall come, and last, and end,
As shall please our heavenly Friend."

And, therefore, we may look upon the to-morrows as we see them in the rough bullion of time, about to be minted into every day's expenditure, and we may say of them all, "They shall all be gold; they shall all be stamped with the king's impress, and, therefore, let them come; they will not make me worse—they will work together for my good."

Yea, more, a Christian may rightly look forward to his to-morrows, not simply with resignation, but also with *joy*. To-morrow to a Christian is a happy thing, it is one stage nearer glory. To-morrow! It is one step nearer heaven to a believer; it is just one knot more that he has sailed across the dangerous sea of life, and he is so much the nearer to his eternal port—his blissful heaven. To-morrow, it is a fresh lamp of fulfilled promise that God has placed in his firmament, that the Christian may hail it as a guiding star, in the future, or at least as a light to cheer his path. To-morrow, the Christian may rejoice at it; he may say of to-day, "O day, thou mayest be black, but I shall bid thee good bye, for lo, I see the morrow coming, and I shall mount upon its wings, and shall flee away and leave thee and thy sorrows far behind me."

And, moreover, the Christian may await to-morrow with even more than simple hope and joy; he may look forward to it with *ecstasy* in some measure, for he does not know but that to-morrow his Lord may come. To-morrow Christ may be upon this earth, "for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." To-morrow, all the glories of millennial splendour may be revealed; to-morrow, the thrones of judgment may be set, and the king may summon the people to judgment. To-morrow, we may be in heaven; to-morrow, we may be on the breast of Christ; to-morrow, aye, before then, this head may wear a crown, this hand may wave the palm, this lip may sing the song, this foot may tread the streets of gold, this heart may be full of bliss immortal, everlasting, eternal. Be of good cheer, oh, fellow-Christian; to-morrow can have nothing black in it to thee, for it must work for thy good, but it may have in it a precious, precious jewel. It is an earthen pitcher, and it may have in it some dark black waters, but their bitterness is taken away by the cross. But mayhap, also, it may have in it the precious jewel of eternity; for wrapt up within to-morrow may be all the glories of immortality. Aoint thine head with fresh oil of gladness at the prospect of each coming day. Boast not of to-morrow, but often comfort thyself with it. Thou hast a right to do so; it cannot be a bad to-morrow to thee; it may be the best day of thy life, for it may be thy last.

And yet, another hint. To-morrow ought to be observed by Christians in the way of providence. Though we may not boast of to-morrow, yet we may seek to provide for the morrow. On one occasion I pleaded for a benefit society, and not knowing a more appropriate text, I selected this, "Take no thought for the morrow, for to-morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." Some of my hearers, when I announced my text, feared the principle of it was altogether hostile to anything like an insurance, or providing for the future, but I just showed them that it was not, as I looked upon it. It is a positive command that we are to take no anxious thought concerning to-morrow. Now, how can I do that? How can I put myself into such a position that I can carry out this commandment of taking no thought for the morrow? If I were a man struggling in life, and had it in my power to insure for something which would take care of wife and family in after days, if I did not do it, you might preach to me to all eternity about not taking thought for the morrow; but I could not help doing it, when I saw those I loved around me unprovided for. Let it be in God's word, I could not practice it; I should still be at some time or other taking thought for the morrow. But let me go to one of the many of the excellent institutions which exist, and let me see that all is provided for, I come home and say "Now, I know how to practise Christ's command of taking no thought for the morrow; I pay the policy money once a year, and I take no further thought

about it, for I have no occasion to do so now, and have obeyed the very spirit and letter of Christ's command." Our Lord meant that we were to get rid of cares; now it is apparent that those distressing cares are removed, and we are able to live above anxiety it by that single process.

Now, if that is so, if there is anything that enables us to carry out Christ's commands, is it not in the very bowels of the commandments to do that? If God has pleased to put into the hearts of wise men to devise something that should in some way ameliorate the misfortunes of their kind, and relieve them from the distresses and casualties of God's providence, how can it but be our duty to avail ourselves of that wisdom which, doubtless, God gave to men, that we might thereby in these times be enabled to carry out in the fullest extent the meaning of that passage, "Take no thought for the morrow." Why, if a man says, "I shall take no thought for the morrow, I will just spend all I get, and not think of doing anything or taking any thought for the morrow," how is he going to pay his rent? Why, the text could not be carried out, if it meant what some people think. It cannot mean that we should carelessly live by the day, or else a man would spend all his money on Saturday, and have nothing left for the rest of the week; but that would be simple folly. It means that we should have no anxious, distressing thought about it. I am preaching about benefit societies; I would not attempt to recommend many of them, and I do not believe in the principles of half of them; I believe a great deal of mischief is done by their gatherings in alehouses and pothouses; but wherever there is a Christian society, I must endeavour to promote its welfare, for I look on the principle as the best means of carrying out the command of Christ, "Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for itself." Allow me to recommend this Asylum to your liberality as a refuge in adversity for those who were careful in prosperity. It is a quiet retreat for decayed members of Benefit Societies, and I am sorry to inform you that many of its rooms are vacant, not from want of candidates, but from a lack of funds. It is a pity that so much public property should lie unemployed. Help the committee then to use the houses.

And now, in concluding, let me remind the Christian that there is one thing he has not to do, and that is, he has not to provide salvation, nor grace, nor sustenance, nor promises for the morrow. No, beloved; but we often talk as if we had. We say, "How shall I persevere through such-and-such a trial?" "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." You must not boast of to-day's grace, as though it were enough for to-morrow. But you need not be afraid! With to-morrow's difficulties there will be to-morrow's help; with to-morrow's foes, to-morrow's friends; with to-morrow's danger's, to-morrow's preservations. Let us look forward, then, to to-morrow as a thing we have not to provide for in spiritual matters, for the atonement is finished, the covenant ratified, and therefore every promise shall be fulfilled, and be yea and amen to us, not only in one to-morrow, but in fifty thousands to-morrows, if so many could run over our heads.

And now just let us utter the words of the text again, very solemnly and earnestly. O, young men in all your glory! O, maidens in all your beauty! boast not yourselves of to-morrow. The worm may be at your cheeks very soon. O, strong men, whose bones are full of marrow! O, ye mighty men, whose nerves seem of brass, and your sinews of steel! boast not of to-morrow. "Howl, fir tree," for cedars have fallen ere now, and though you think yourselves great, God can pull you down. Above all, ye grey heads, boast not yourselves of to-morrow, with one foot hanging over the unfathomable gulf of eternity, and the other, just tottering on the edge of time! I beseech you, do not boast yourselves of to-morrow. In truth I do believe that grey heads are not less foolish on this point than very childhood. I remember reading a story of a man who wanted to buy his neighbour's farm next to him, and he went to him and asked him whether he would sell it. He said "No, he would not;" so he went home and said, "Never mind, farmer so-and-so is an old man; when he is dead I shall buy it." The man was seventy, and his neighbour sixty-eight; he thought the other would be sure to die before him. It is often so with men. They are making schemes that will only walk over their graves, when they will not feel them; the winds shall soon howl across the green sward that covers their tomb, but they shall not hear its wailing. Take care of the to-day's! Look not through the glass of futurity, but look at the things of to-day. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

The New Park Street Pulpit.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 10, 1856, BY THE

REV. C. H. SPURGEON,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"This shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year."—Leviticus xvi. 34.

THE JEWS had many striking ceremonies which marvellously set forth the death of Jesus Christ as the great expiation of our guilt and the salvation of our souls. One of the chief of these was the day of atonement, which I believe was pre-eminently intended to typify that great day of vengeance of our God, which was, also, the great day of acceptance of our souls, when Jesus Christ "died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." That day of atonement happened only *once a year*, to teach us that only once should Jesus Christ die; and that though he would come a second time, yet it would be without a sin offering unto salvation. The lambs were perpetually slaughtered; morning and evening they offered sacrifice to God, to remind the people that they always needed a sacrifice; but the day of atonement being the type of the one great propitiation, it was but once a year that the high priest entered within the veil with blood as the atonement for the sins of the people. And this was on a certain set and *appointed time*; it was not left to the choice of Moses or to the convenience of Aaron, or to any other circumstance which might affect the date; it was appointed to be on a peculiar set day, as you find at the 29th verse: "In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month;" and at no other time was the day of atonement to be, to show us that God's great day of atonement was appointed and predestinated by himself. Christ's expiation occurred but once, and then not by any chance; God had settled it from before the foundation of the world; and at that hour when God had predestinated, on that very day that God had decreed that Christ should die, was he led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers he was dumb. It was but once a year, because the sacrifice should be once; it was at an appointed time in the year because in the fullness of time Jesus Christ should come into the world to die for us.

Now, I shall invite your attention to the ceremonies of this solemn day, taking the different parts in detail. First, we shall consider the *person who made the atonement*; secondly, the *sacrifice whereby the atonement was typically made*; thirdly, the *effects of the atonement*; and fourthly, our *behaviour on the recollection of the atonement*, as well set forth by the conduct prescribed to the Israelites on that day.

I. First, THE PERSON WHO WAS TO MAKE THE ATONEMENT. And at the outset, we remark that *Aaron, the high priest*, did it. "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place; with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering." Inferior priests slaughtered the lambs; other priests at other times did almost all the work of the sanctuary; but on this day nothing was done by any one, as a part of the business of the great day of atonement, except by the high priest. Old rabbinical traditions tell us that everything on that day was done by him, even the lighting

of the candles, and the fires, and the incense, and all the offices that were required, and that, for a fortnight beforehand, he was obliged to go into the tabernacle to slaughter the bullocks and assist in the work of the priests and Levites, that he might be prepared to do the work which was unusual to him. All the labour was left to him. So, beloved, Jesus Christ, the High Priest, and he only, works the atonement. There are other priests, for "he hath made *us* priests and kings unto God." Every Christian is a priest to offer sacrifice of prayer and praise unto God, but none save the High Priest must offer atonement; he, and he alone, must go within the vail; he must slaughter the goat and sprinkle the blood; for though thanksgiving is shared in by all Christ's elect body, atonement remains alone to him, the High Priest.

Then it is interesting to notice, that the High Priest on this day was a *humbled priest*. You read in the 4th verse, "He shall put on the holy *linen* coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments." On other days he wore what the people were accustomed to call the golden garments; he had the mitre, with a plate of pure gold around his brow, tied with brilliant blue; the splendid breastplate, studded with gems, adorned with pure gold and set with precious stones; the glorious ephod, the tinkling bells, and all the other bedizements, wherewith he came before the people as the accepted High Priest. But on this day he had none of them. The golden mitre was laid aside, the embroidered vest was put away, the breastplate was taken off, and he came out simply with the holy linen coat, the linen breeches, the linen mitre, and girded with a linen girdle. On that day he humbled himself just as the people humbled themselves. Now, that is a notable circumstance. You will see sundry other passages in the references which will bear this out, that the priest's dress on this day was different. As Mayer tells us, he wore garments, and glorious ones, on other days, but on this day he wore four humble ones. Jesus Christ, then, when he made atonement, was a humbled priest. He did not make atonement, arrayed in all the glories of his ancient throne in heaven. Upon his brow there was no diadem save the crown of thorns; around him was cast no purple robe save that which he wore for a time in mockery; on his head was no sceptre save the reed which they thrust in cruel contempt upon him; he had no sandals of pure gold, neither was he dressed as king; he had none of those splendours about him which should make him mighty and distinguished among men; he came out in his simple body, ay, in his naked body, for they stripped off even the common robe from him, and made him hang before God's sun and God's universe, naked, to his shame and to the disgrace of those who chose to do so cruel and dastardly a deed. Oh! my soul, adore thy Jesus who, when he made atonement, humbled himself and wrapped around him a garb of thine inferior clay. Oh! angels, ye can understand what were the glories that he laid aside. Oh! thrones, and principalities, and powers, ye can tell what was the diadem with which he dispensed, and what, the robes he laid aside to wrap himself in earthly garbs. But, men, ye can scarce tell how glorious is your High Priest now, and ye can scarce tell how glorious he was before. But oh! adore him, for on that day it was the simple clean linen of his own body, of his own humanity, in which he made atonement for your sins.

In the next place, the high priest who offered the atonement must be a *spotless high priest*; and because there were none such to be found, Aaron being a sinner himself as well as the people, you will remark that Aaron had to sanctify himself and make an atonement for his own sin before he could go in to make an atonement for the sins of the people. In the 3rd verse you read, "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering." These were for himself. In the 6th verse it is said, "And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house." Yea, more, before he went into the vail with the blood of the goat which was the atonement for the people, he had to go within the vail to make atonement there for himself. In the 11th, 12th, and 13th verses, it is said, "And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself. And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail. And he shall put the incense upon the

fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not." "And he shall take of the blood of the bullock [that is, the bullock that he killed for himself], and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times." This was before he killed the goat, for it says, "Then shall he kill the goat." Before he took the blood which was a type of Christ within the vail, he took the blood (which was a type of Christ in another sense), wherewith he purified himself. Aaron must not go within the vail until by the bullock his sins had been typically expiated, nor even then without the burning smoking incense before his face, lest God should look on him, and he should die, being an impure mortal. Moreover, the Jews tell us that Aaron had to wash himself, I think, five times in the day; and it is said in this chapter that he had to wash himself many times. We read, in the 4th verse, "These are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on." And at the 24th verse, "He shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments." So you see it was strictly provided for that Aaron on that day should be a spotless priest. He could not be so as to nature, but, ceremonially, care was taken that he should be clean. He was washed over and over again in the sacred bath. And besides that, there was the blood of the bullock and the smoke of the incense, that he might be acceptable before God. Ah! beloved, and we have a spotless High Priest; we have one who needed no washing, for he had no filth to wash away; we have one who needed no atonement for himself, for he, for ever, might have sat down at the right hand of God, and ne'er have come on earth at all. He was pure and spotless; he needed no incense to wave before the mercy seat to hide the angry face of justice; he needed nothing to hide and shelter him; he was all pure and clean. Oh! bow down and adore him, for if he had not been a holy High Priest, he could never have taken thy sins upon himself, and never have made intercession for thee. Oh! reverence him, that, spotless as he was, he should come into this world and say, "For this cause I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth." Adore and love him, the spotless High Priest, who, on the day of atonement took away thy guilt.

Again, the atonement was made by a *solitary high priest*—alone and unassisted. You read in the 17th verse, "And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel." No other man was to be present, so that the people might be quite certain that everything was done by the High Priest alone. It is remarkable, as Matthew Henry observes, that no disciple died with Christ. When he was put to death, his disciples forsook him and fled; they crucified none of his followers with him, lest any should suppose that the disciple shared the honour of atonement. Thieves were crucified with him because none would suspect that they could assist him; but if a disciple had died, it might have been imagined that he had shared the atonement. God kept that holy circle of Calvary select to Christ, and none of his disciples must go to die there with him. O glorious High Priest, thou hast done it all alone. O, glorious antitype of Aaron, no son of thine stood with thee; no Eliezer, no Phineas, burned incense; there was no priest, no Levite, save thyself. "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me." Then give all the glory unto his holy name, for alone and unassisted he made atonement for your guilt. The bath of his blood is your only washing; the stream of water from his side is your perfect purification. None but Jesus, none but Jesus, has wrought out the work of our salvation.

Again, it was a *laborious high priest* who did the work on that day. It is astonishing how, after comparative rest, he should be so accustomed to his work as to be able to perform all that he had to do on that day. I have endeavoured to count up how many creatures he had to kill, and I find that there were fifteen beasts which he slaughtered at different times, besides the other offices which were all left to him. In the first place, there were the two lambs, one offered in the morning, and the other in the evening; they were never omitted, being a perpetual ordinance. On this day the high priest killed those two lambs. Further, if you will turn to Numbers xxix. 7—11, "And ye shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month an holy convocation; and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work therein: But

ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the Lord for a sweet savour; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year; they shall be unto you without blemish: And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals to a bullock, and two tenth deals to one ram, A several tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs: One kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the sin offering of atonement, and the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering of it, and their drink offerings." Here, then, was one bullock, a ram, seven lambs, and a kid of the goats; making ten. The two lambs make twelve. And in the chapter we have been studying, it is said, in the 3rd verse: "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering," which makes the number fourteen. Then, after that, we find there were two goats, but only one of them was killed, the other being allowed to go away. Thus, then, there were fifteen beasts to be slaughtered, besides the burnt offerings of thanksgiving which were offered by way of showing that the people, now desired to dedicate themselves to the Lord from gratitude, that the atonement of sin offering had been accepted. He who was ordained priest in Jeshurun, for that day, toiled like a common Levite, worked as laboriously as priest could do, and far more so than on any ordinary day. Just so with our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, what a labour the atonement was to him! It was a work that all the hands of the universe could not have accomplished; yet, he completed it alone. It was a work more laborious than the treading of the wine press, and his frame, unless sustained by the divinity within, could scarce have borne such stupendous labour. There was the bloody sweat in Gethsemane; there was the watching all night, just as the high priest did for fear that uncleanness might touch him; there was the hooting and the scorn which he suffered every day before—something like the continual offering of the Lamb; then there came the shame, the spitting, the cruel flagellations in Pilate's hall; then there was the *via dolorosa* through Jerusalem's sad streets; then came the hanging on the cross, with the weight of his people's sins on his shoulders. Ay, it was a Divine labour that our great High Priest did on that day—a labour mightier than the making of the world: it was the new making of a world, the taking of its sins upon his Almighty shoulders and casting them into the depths of the sea. The atonement was made by a toilsome, laborious High Priest, who worked, *indeed*, that day; and Jesus, though he had toiled before, yet never worked as he did on that wondrous day of atonement.

II. Thus have I led you to consider the person who made the atonement: let us now consider for a moment or two THE MEANS WHEREBY THIS ATONEMENT WAS MADE. You read at the 5th verse, "And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering." And at the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th verses, "And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness." The first goat I consider to be the great type of Jesus Christ the atonement; *such I do not consider the scapegoat to be*. The first is the type of the means whereby the atonement was made, and we shall keep to that first.

Notice that this goat, of course, answered all the pre-requisites of every other thing that was sacrificed; it must be a *perfect, unblemished goat of the first year*. Even so was our Lord a perfect man, in the prime and vigour of his manhood. And further, this goat was an eminent type of Christ from the fact that *it was taken of the congregation of the children of Israel*, as we are told at the 5th verse. The public treasury furnished the goat. So, beloved, Jesus Christ was, first of all, purchased by the public treasury of the Jewish people before he died. Thirty pieces of silver they had valued him at, a goodly price; and as they had been accustomed to bring the goat so they brought him to be offered, not, indeed, with the intention that he should be their sacrifice, but unwittingly they fulfilled this when they brought him to Pilate, and cried, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Oh, beloved! indeed, Jesus Christ came out from the midst of the people, and the people brought him. Strange, that it should be so! "He came unto his own, and his own received him

not;" his own led him forth to slaughter; his own dragged him before the mercy seat.

Note, again, that though this goat, like the scapegoat, was brought by the people, *God's decision* was in it still. Mark, it is said, "Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat." I conceive this mention of lots is to teach that although the Jews brought Jesus Christ of their own will to die, yet, Christ had been appointed to die; and even the very man who sold him was appointed to it—so saith the Scripture. Christ's death was fore-ordained, and there was not only man's hand in it, but God's. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposal of it is the Lord's." So it is true that man put Christ to death, but it was of the Lord's disposal that Jesus Christ was slaughtered, "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God."

Next, behold the goat that destiny has marked out to make the atonement. Come and *see it die*. The priest stabs it. Mark it in its agonies; behold it struggling for a moment; observe the blood as it gushes forth. Christians, ye have here your Saviour. See his Father's vengeful sword sheathed in his heart; behold his death agonies; see the clammy sweat upon his brow; mark his tongue cleaving to the roof of his mouth; hear his sighs and groans upon the cross; hark to his shriek, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani," and you have more now to think of than you could have if you only stood to see the death of a goat for your atonement. Mark the blood as from his wounded hands it flows, and from his feet it finds a channel to the earth; from his open side in one great river see it gush. As the blood of the goat made the atonement typically, so, Christian, thy Saviour dying for thee made the great atonement for thy sins, and thou may'st go free.

But mark, this goat's blood was not only shed for many for the remission of sins as a type of Christ, but that blood was *taken within the vail*, and there it was sprinkled. So with Jesus's blood, "Sprinkled now with blood the throne." The blood of other beasts (save only of the bullock) was offered before the Lord, and was not brought into the most holy place; but this goat's blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat, to make an atonement. So, O child of God, thy Saviour's blood has made atonement within the vail; he has taken it there himself; his own merits and his own agonies are now within the vail of glory, sprinkled now before the throne. O glorious sacrifice, as well as High Priest, we would adore thee, for by thy one offering thou hast made atonement for ever, even as this one slaughtered goat made atonement once in a year for the sins of all the people.

III. We now come to the EFFECTS.

One of the first effects of the death of this goat was *the sanctification of the holy things which had been made unholy*. You read at the end of the 15th verse, "He shall sprinkle it upon the mercy seat: and he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness." The holy place was made unholy by the people. Where God dwelt should be holy, but where man comes there must be some degree of unholiness. This blood of the goat made the unholy place holy. It was a sweet reflection to me as I came here this morning. I thought, "I am going to the house of God, and that house is a holy place;" but when I thought how many sinners had trodden its floors, how many unholy ones had joined in its songs, I thought, "Ah! it has been made defiled; but oh! there is no fear, for the blood of Jesus has made it holy again." "Ah!" I thought, "there is our poor prayer that we shall offer: it is a holy prayer for God the Holy Spirit dictates it, but then it is an unholy prayer, for *we* have uttered it, and that which cometh out of unholy lips like ours, must be tainted." "But ah!" I thought again, "it is a prayer that has been sprinkled with blood, and therefore it must be a holy prayer." And as I looked on all the harps of this sanctuary, typical of your praises, and on all the censers of this tabernacle, typical of your prayers, I thought within myself, "There is blood on them all; our holy service this day has been sprinkled with the blood of the great Jesus, and as such it will be accepted through him." Oh, beloved! is it not sweet to reflect that our holy things are now really holy; that though sin is mixed with them all, and we think them defiled, yet they are not, for the blood has washed out every stain; and the service this day is as holy in God's

sight as the service of the cherubim, and is as acceptable as the psalms of the glorified; we have washed our worship in the blood of the Lamb, and it is accepted through him.

But observe, the second great fact was that *their sins were taken away*. This was set forth by the scapegoat. You read at the 20th verse, "And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness." When that was done, you see, the great and wonderful atonement was finished, and the effects of it were set forth to the people. Now, I do not know how many opinions there are about this scapegoat. One of the most strange opinions to me is that which is held by a very large portion of learned men, and I see it is put in the margin of my Bible. Many learned men think that this word scapegoat, *Azazel*, was the name of the devil who was worshipped by the heathen in the form of a goat; and they tell us that the first goat was offered to God as an atonement for sin, and the other went away to be tormented by the devil, and was called *Azazel*, just as Jesus was tormented by Satan in the wilderness. To this opinion, it is enough to object that it is difficult to conceive when the other goat was offered to God, this should be sent among demons. Indeed, the opinion is too gross for belief. It needs only to be mentioned to be refuted. Now the first goat is the Lord Jesus Christ making atonement by his death for the sins of the people; the second is sent away into the wilderness, and nothing is heard of it any more for ever; and here a difficulty suggests itself—"Did Jesus Christ go where he was never heard of anymore for ever?" That is what we have not to consider at all. The first goat was a type of the atonement; the second is the type of the effect of the atonement. The second goat went away, after the first was slaughtered, carrying the sins of the people on its head, and so it sets forth, as a scapegoat, how our sins are carried away into the depth of the wilderness. There was this year exhibited in the Art Union a fine picture of the scapegoat dying in the wilderness: it was represented with a burning sky above it, its feet sticking in the mire, surrounded by hundreds of skeletons, and there dying a doleful and miserable death. Now, that was just a piece of gratuitous nonsense, for there is nothing in the Scripture that warrants it in the least degree. The rabbis tell us that this goat was taken by a man into the wilderness and there tumbled down a high rock to die; but, as an excellent commentator says, if the man did push it down the rock he did more than God ever told him to do. God told him to take a goat and let it go: as to what became of it neither you nor I know anything; that is purposely left. Our Lord Jesus Christ has taken away our sins upon his head, just as the scapegoat, and he is gone from us—that is all: the goat was not a type in its dying, or in regard to its subsequent fate. God has only told us that it should be taken by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. The most correct account seems to be that of one Rabbi Jarchi, who says that they generally took the goat twelve miles out of Jerusalem, and at each mile there was a booth provided where the man who took it might refresh himself till he came to the tenth mile, when there was no more rest for him till he had seen the goat go. When he had come to the last mile he stood and looked at the goat till it was gone, and he could see it no more. Then the people's sins were all gone too. Now, what a fine type that is if you don't enquire any further! But if you will get meddling where God intended you to be in ignorance, you will get nothing by it. This scapegoat was not designed to show us the victim or the sacrifice, but simply what became of the sins. The sins of the people are confessed upon that head; the goat is going; the people lose sight of it; a fit man goes with it; the sins are going from them, and now the man has arrived at his destination; the man sees the goat in the distance skipping here and there over the mountains, glad of its liberty; it is not quite gone; a little farther, and now it is lost to sight. The man returns, and says he can no longer see it; then the people clap their hands, for their sins are all gone too. Oh, soul! canst thou see thy sins all gone? We may have to take a long journey, and carry our sins with us; but oh! how we watch and watch till they are utterly cast into the depths of the wilderness of forgetfulness,

where they shall never be found any more against us for ever. But mark, this goat did not sacrificially make the atonement; it was a type of the sins going away, and so it was a type of the atonement, for you know, since our sins are thereby lost it is the fruit of the atonement; but the sacrifice is the means of making it. So we have this great and glorious thought before us, that by the death of Christ there was full, free, perfect remission for all those whose sins are laid upon his head. For I would have you notice that on this day all sins were laid on the scapegoat's head—sins of presumption, sins of ignorance, sins of uncleanness, sins little and sins great, sins few and sins many, sins against the law, sins against morality, sins against ceremonies, sins of all kinds were taken away on that great day of atonement. Sinner, oh, that thou hadst a share in my Master's atonement! Oh! that thou couldst see him slaughtered on the cross! Then mightest thou see him go away leading captivity captive, and taking thy sins where they might ne'er be found.

I have now an interesting fact to tell you, and I am sure you will think it worth mentioning. Turn to Leviticus xxv, 9, and you will read: "Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the *jubilee* to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land." So that one of the effects of the atonement was set forth to us in the fact that when the year of jubilee came, it was not on the first day of the year that it was proclaimed, but "on the tenth day of the seventh month." Ay, methinks, that was the best part of it. The scapegoat is gone, and the sins are gone; and no sooner are they gone than the silver trumpet sounds,

"The year of jubilee is come,
Return, ye ransomed sinners, home."

On that day sinners go free; on that day our poor mortgaged lands are liberated, and our poor estates which have been forfeited by our spiritual bankruptcy are all returned to us. So when Jesus dies, slaves win their liberty, and lost ones receive spiritual life again; when he dies, heaven, the long lost inheritance is ours. Blessed day! Atonement and jubilee ought to go together. Have you ever had a jubilee, my friends, in your hearts? If you have not, I can tell you it is because you have not had a day of atonement.

One more thought concerning the effects of this great day of atonement, and you will observe that it runs throughout the whole of the chapter—*entrance within the vail*. Only on one day in the year might the high priest enter within the vail, and then it must be for the great purposes of the atonement. Now, beloved, the atonement is finished, and you may enter within the vail: "Having boldness, therefore, to enter within the vail, let us come with boldness unto the throne of the heavenly grace." The vail of the temple is rent by the atonement of Christ, and access to the throne is now ours. O child of God, I know not of any privilege which thou hast, save fellowship with Christ, which is more valuable than access to the throne. Access to the mercy seat is one of the greatest blessings mortals can enjoy. Precious throne of grace! I never should have had any right to come there if it had not been for the day of atonement; I never should have been able to come there if the throne had not been sprinkled with the blood.

IV. Now we come to notice, in the fourth place, what is OUR PROPER BEHAVIOUR WHEN WE CONSIDER THE DAY OF ATONEMENT. You read at the 29th verse., "And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall *afflict your souls*." That is one thing that we ought to do when we remember the atonement. Sure, sinner, there is nothing that should move thee to repentance like the thought of that great sacrifice of Christ which is neces-

sary to wash away thy guilt. "Law and terrors do but harden," but methinks, the thought that Jesus died is enough to make us melt. It is well, when we hear the name of Calvary, always to shed a tear, for there is nothing that ought to make a sinner weep like the mention of the death of Jesus. On that day "ye shall afflict your souls." And even you, ye Christians, when ye think that your Saviour died, should afflict your souls: ye should say,

"Alas! and did my Saviour bleed?
And did my Sov'reign die?
Would he devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?"

Drops of grief ought to flow, ay, streams of undissembled sympathy with him; to show our grief for what we did to pierce the Saviour. "Afflict your souls," O ye children of Israel, for the day of atonement is come. Weep o'er your Jesus; weep for him that died; weep for him who was murdered by your sins, and "afflict your souls."

Then, better still, we are to "*do no work at all*," as ye find in the same verse, 29th. When we consider the atonement, we should rest, and "*do no work at all*." Rest from your works as God did from his on the great Sabbath of the world; rest from your own righteousness; rest from your toilsome duties: rest in him. "We that believe do enter into rest." As soon as thou seest the atonement finished, say, "It is done, it is done! Now will I serve my God with zeal, but now I will no longer seek to save myself; it is done, it is done for aye."

Then there was another thing which always happened. When the priest had made the atonement, it was usual for him, after he had washed himself, to *come out again in his glorious garments*. When the people saw him they attended him to his house with joy, and they offered burnt offerings of praise on that day: he being thankful that his life was spared, (having been allowed to go into the holy place and to come out of it) and they being thankful that the atonement was accepted; both of them offering burnt offerings as a type that they desired now to be "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God." Beloved, let us go into our houses with joy; let us go into our gates with praise. The atonement is finished; the High Priest is gone within the vail; salvation is now complete. He has laid aside the linen garments, and he stands before you with his breastplate, and his mitre, and his embroidered vest, in all his glory. Hear how he rejoices over us, for he hath redeemed his people, and ransomed them out of the hands of his enemies. Come, let us go home with the High Priest; let us clap our hands with joy, for he liveth, he liveth; the atonement is accepted, and we are accepted too; the scapegoat is gone, our sins are gone with it. Let us then go to our houses with thankfulness, and let us come up to his gates with praise, for he hath loved his people, he hath blessed his children, and given unto us a day of atonement, and a day of acceptance, and a year of jubilee. Praise ye the Lord! Praise ye the Lord!

The New Park Street Pulpit.

THE CHRISTIAN—A DEBTOR.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, AUGUST 10, 1856, BY THE

REV. C. H. SPURGEON,

AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors.”—Romans viii. 12.

OBSERVE the title whereby he addressed the Church, “Brethren.” It was the gospel which taught Paul how to say *brother*. If he had not been a Christian, his Jewish dignity would never have condescended to call a Roman “brother;” for the Jew sneered on the Gentile, and called him “dog.” But now in the breast of this “Hebrew of the Hebrews,” there is the holy recognition of Christian fraternity without reserve or hypocrisy. The gospel softened the breast of Paul, and made him forget all national animosities, otherwise, one of the down-trodden race would not have called his oppressor “brother.” The Roman had his iron foot on the Jew; yet Paul addresses those, who subjugated his race, as “brethren.” We repeat, a third time, it was the gospel which implanted in the soul of Paul the feeling of brotherhood, and removed every wall of partition which divided him from any of the Lord’s elect. “So then,” he said, “we are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” He proclaimed the doctrine of the “one blood,” and gloried in the fact of “one family” in Christ. He felt within him affinities with all the blood-bought race, and loved them all. He had not seen many of those whom he addressed; yet they were known to him, in the Spirit, as partakers of one glorious and blessed hope, and, therefore, he called them “brethren.” My friends, there is a cementing power in the grace of God which can scarcely be over-estimated. It resets the dislocated bones of society, rivets the bonds of friendship, and welds the broken metal of manhood into one united mass. It makes all brethren who feel its power. Grace links mankind in a common brotherhood; grace makes the great man give his hand to the poor, and confess a heavenly relationship; grace constrains the intellectual, the learned, the polite, to stoop from their dignity to take hold of the ignorant and unlettered, and call them friends; grace weaves the threads of our separate individualities into one undivided unity. Let the gospel be really felt in the mind and it will toll the knell of selfishness, it will bring down the proud from their elevated solitude, and it will restore the down-trodden to the rights of our common manhood. We need only the gospel thoroughly preached to bring about “liberty, equality, and fraternity,” in the highest and best sense of these words. Not the “liberty, equality, and fraternity” which the democrat seeks for, which is frequently another name for *his own* superiority, but that which is true and real—that which

will make us all free in the Spirit, make us all equal in the person of Christ Jesus, and give us all the fraternity of brethren, seeing that we are all one with our Lord, in the common bond of gospel relationship. Let the truths of Christianity work out their perfect work: and pride, bitterness, wrath, envy, and malice, must see their graves. This and this alone can restore the peace of divided families, and unite disputing relatives. Only let the gospel be preached, and there shall be an end of war; let it thoroughly pervade all ranks of society, and saturate the mind of nations, and there shall be no more lifting of the spears, they shall be used for pruning hooks; no bathing of swords in blood, for they shall be turned into the peaceful ploughshares of the soil; we shall then have no hosts encountering hosts; we shall have no millions slain for widows to deplore; but every man shall meet every other man, and call him "brother." And men of every kindred, and of every tribe, shall see in the face of every man, a relative allied to them by ties of blood. I am sure I feel, myself, the force of this word "brother," with regard to many of you. If ye be partakers of that glorious hope, if ye be believers in our glorious Redeemer, if ye have put your trust under the shadow of his wings, my hand and my heart with it, there is that word "brother" for you. And so addressing you, who love the Lord, under that title; I come at once to the text, "*Brethren, we are debtors.*" We are all of us under obligations; let us consider the fact in the following manner:—First, *how are we to understand this?* and secondly, *how ought it to effect us?*

I. HOW ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND THIS, "Brethren, we are debtors?" We may understand it in a thousand senses, for indeed we are debtors. Brethren, we who know and love the Lord, are debtors, not to one creditor, but to many.

We are debtors *to the past*. Methinks I see the fathers at their midnight lamps, the ancient saints in their much-frequented closets, the thrice brave preachers in their pulpits denouncing error, and the faithful pastors reproving wrong. To such who have preceded us we owe the purity of the Church, and to them we are debtors. Methinks I see the martyrs and confessors rising from their tombs—I mark their hands still stained with blood, and their bodies scarred with the wounds of persecution. They tell me, that they of old maintained the truth and preached it, in the midst of fire and sword—that they bore death in defence of the cause of God, that they might hand down his holy word inviolate to us! I look on them, and see among their glorious ranks, some whose names are celebrated in every Christian land as the bold "lions of God," the immovable pillars of truth; men of whom the world was not worthy, whose praise is in all the churches, and who are now nearest the eternal throne. And as I look on them, and they on me, I turn to you all and say, "Brethren, we are debtors." We are debtors to the men who crossed the sea, and laughed at the fury of the storm, who risked the journeying, and the weariness, and all the various perils to which they were exposed, by reason of robbers and false brethren; we are debtors to each stake at Smithfield; we are debtors to the sacred ashes of the thousands who have there followed Jesus, even unto death; we are debtors to the headless bodies of those who were beheaded for Christ Jesus; we are debtors to those who dared the lions in the amphitheatre and fought with wild beasts at Ephesus; we are debtors to the

massacred thousands of the bloody church of Rome, and the murdered myriads of her pagan predecessors; we are debtors to them all. Remember the bloody day of St. Bartholomew, the valleys of the Piedmont, and the mountains of Switzerland. Let the sacred mounds of our fathers' sepulchres speak to us. Is not this Bible opened and read by us all, the gift of their self-denying faithfulness. Is not the free air we breathe the purchase of their death? Did not they, by bitter suffering, achieve our liberty for us? And are we not debtors to them? Shall we not, in some degree, repay the immense debt of our obligation by seeking to make the future also debtors to us, that our descendants may look back and acknowledge that they owe us thanks for preserving the Scriptures, for maintaining liberty, for glorifying God? Brethren, we are debtors to the past.

And I am quite sure we are debtors *to the present*. Wherever we go, we gather fresh proofs of the common observation, that we are are living in a most marvellous age. It is an oft repeated truth, and one which, perhaps, has almost lost its meaning from being so oft repeated, that this is the very crisis. The world has always been in a crisis, but this seems to us to be a peculiar one. We have around us appliances for doing good, such as men never possessed before; we behold around us machinery for doing evil, such as never was at work even in earth's worst days. Good men are labouring, at least, with usual zeal, and bad men are strenuously plying their craft of evil. Infidelity, popery, and every other phase of anti-Christ are now straining every nerve. The tug of war is now with us. Look around you and learn your duty. The work is not yet done, the time of folding of hands has not yet arrived; our swords must not yet see their scabbards, for the foe is not yet slain. We see, in many a land, the proudest dynasties and tyrannies still crushing, with their mountain-weight, every free motion of the consciences and hearts of men. We see, on the other hand, the truest heroism for the right, and the greatest devotion to the truth in hearts that God has touched. We have a work to do, as great as our forefathers, and, perhaps, far greater. The enemies of truth are more numerous and subtle than ever, and the needs of the Church are greater than at any preceding time. If we be not debtors to the present, then men were never debtors to their age and their time. Brethren, we are debtors to the hour in which we live. Oh! that we might stamp it with truth, and that God might help us to impress upon its wings some proof that it has not flown by neglected and unheeded.

And, brethren, we are debtors *to the future*. If we, the children of God, are not valiant for truth now, if we maintain not the great standard of God's omnipotent truth, we shall be traitors to our liege Lord. Who can tell the fearful consequences to future generations if we now betray our trust. If we suffer orthodoxy to fail, or God's truth to be dishonoured, future generations will despise and execrate our name. If we now suffer the good vessel of gospel truth to be drifted by adverse winds upon the rock, if we keep not good watch to her helm, and cry not well to her great Master that she may be led to a prosperous end, surely those who are to succeed us will look on us with scorn, and say, "shame on the men, who had so great and glorious a mission, and neglected it, and handed down to us a beclouded gospel and an impure

Church." Stand up ye warriors of the truth, stand up firmly, for ye are debtors to the future, even as ye are debtors to the past. Sow well, for others must reap. You are fountains for coming generations, O, be careful that your streams are pure. May the Spirit of God enable you so to live, that you can bequeath your example as a legacy to the future.

And as we are debtors to all times, so we are all debtors *to all classes*. But there are some that always get well paid for what they do, and, therefore, I shall not mention them, since I am not aware that their claims need my advocacy. We may be remarkably indebted to members of parliament, but for the little they do they are tolerably well rewarded; at least, we take it that the place is more an honour to some of them than they are to their place. It may be true that we owe a great deal to the higher ranks of society; we may possibly, in some mysterious way, be much under obligation to the sacred personages who are styled lords and bishops, but it is not necessary that I should stand up for their claims, for I have no doubt they will take good care of themselves; at any rate they have usually done so, and have not allowed themselves to be robbed of much of their deservings. (Who would wish that they should? but it is possible to pay too dear, especially when you could get on as well without them as with them.) I shall not refer to any class of society, and say of them, we are debtors, except to one, and that is *the poor*. My brethren, we are debtors to the poor. "What!" says some one, "I, debtor to the poor?" Yes, my lady, thou art a debtor to the poorest man that ever walked the earth. The beggar shivering in his rags, may owe thee something, if thou givest him alms; but thou owest him something more. Charity to the poor is a debt. We are not at liberty to give or to refuse. God requires us to remember the poor, and their poverty is a claim upon our generosity. But in the case of the *believing poor*, their claim upon us is far more binding, and I beseech you do not neglect it. O how much we owe them. When I think how the poor toil day after day, and receive barely enough to keep their soul within their body; when I think how frequently they serve their Church, unhonoured and unrewarded, when I know some of them who perform the hardest deeds of service for our common Christianity, and are yet passed by with neglect and scorn; when I remember how many of them are toiling in the Sabbath-school, having neither emolument nor reward; when I consider how many of the lower classes are as prayerful, as careful, as honest, as upright, as devout, as spiritual as others are, and frequently more so, I cannot but say that we are debtors to all God's poor in a very large degree. We little know how many a blessing the poor man's prayer brings down upon us. I beseech you then, beloved, wherever you see a poor saint, wherever you behold an aged Christian, recollect he cannot be so much in debt to you as you are to him, for you have much, and he has but little, and he cannot be in debt for what he has not. Many of you will not feel the force of Christian reasons, let me remind you, that even you are obliged to the labouring poor. The rich man hoards wealth, the poor man makes it. Great men get the blessing, but poor men bring it down from heaven. Some men are the cisterns that hold God's rain; but other men are those who pray the rain from heaven, like very Elijahs, and many of

these are to be found in the lower ranks of society. "Brethren, we are debtors;" what I have is not my own, but God's; and if it be God's, then it belongs to God's poor. What the wealthiest man has is not his own, but God's, and if it be God's, then it is Christ's, and if Christ's, then his children's; and Christ's children are often those who are hungry, and thirsty, and destitute, and afflicted, and tormented. Take care then of that class, brethren, for we are debtors to them.

But while I have thus mentioned some of the different classes to whom we are debtors, I have not yet come to the point on which I desire to press your attention. Brethren, we are debtors *to our covenant God*; that is the point which swallows up all. I owe nothing to the past, I owe nothing to the future, I owe nothing to the rich, and nothing to the poor, compared with what I owe to my God. I am mainly indebted to these because I owe so much to my God. Now, Christian, consider how thou art a debtor to thy God. Remember thou art not a debtor to God in a legal sense, as thou art in Adam, thou art no longer a debtor to God's justice as thou once wast. We are all born God's creatures, and as such we are debtors to him; to obey him with all our body, and soul, and strength. When we have broken his commandments, as we all of us have, we are debtors to his justice, and we owe to him a vast amount of punishment, which we are not able to pay. But of the Christian, it can be said, that he does not owe God's *justice* a solitary farthing; for Christ has paid the debt his people owed. I am a debtor to God's love, I am a debtor to God's grace, I am a debtor to God's power, I am a debtor to God's forgiving mercy; but I am no debtor to his justice—for he, himself, will never accuse me of a debt once paid. It was said, "It is finished," and by that was meant, that whate'er his people owed was wiped away for ever from the book of remembrance. Christ, to the uttermost, has satisfied divine justice; the debt is paid, the hand-writing is nailed to the cross, the receipt is given, and we are debtors to God's justice no longer. But then because we are not debtors to God in that sense, we become ten times more debtors to God than we should have been otherwise. Because he has remitted all our debt of sin, we are all the more indebted to him in another sense. Oh! Christian, stop and ponder for a moment! What a debtor thou art to Divine *Sovereignty*! Thou art not as some, who say, that thou didst choose thyself to be saved; but thou believest that God could have destroyed thee, if he had pleased, and that it is entirely of his own good pleasure that thou art made one of his, while others are suffered to perish. Consider, then, how much thou owest to his Sovereignty! If he had willed it, thou wouldst have been among the damned; if he had not willed thy salvation, all thou couldst do would have been utterly powerless to deliver thee from perdition. Remember how much thou owest to his disinterested *love*, which rent his own Son from his bosom that he might die for thee! Let the cross and bloody sweat remind thee of thine obligation. Consider how much you owe to his forgiving *grace*, that after ten thousand affronts he loves you as infinitely as ever; and after a myriad sins, his Spirit still resides within you. Consider what you owe to his *power*, how he has raised you from your death in sins, how he has preserved your spiritual life, how he has kept you from falling, and how, though a thousand enemies have beset your path, you have been

able to hold on your way ! Consider what thou owest to his *immutability*. Though thou hast changed a thousand times, he has not changed once ; though thou hast shifted thine intentions, and thy will, yet has he not once swerved from his eternal purpose, but still has held thee fast. Consider thou art as deep in debt as thou canst be to every attribute of God. To God thou owest thyself, and all thou hast. “Brethren, we are debtors.”

We are not only debtors to God in the light of gratitude for all these things ; but because of *our relationship to him*. Are we not his *sons*, and is there not a debt the son owes to the father which a lifetime of obedience can never remove ? I feel that to the knee that dandled me and the breast that gave me sustenance I owe more than I can ever pay ; and to him who taught me, and led me in the paths of truth I owe so much that I dare not speak of the tremendous weight of obligation due to him. Beloved, if God be a father, where is his honour ? and if we be his sons, are we not thereby bound to love, serve, and obey him ? Sonship towards an earthly parent brings with it a host of duties, and shall the Everlasting Father be unregarded ? No. The true son of God will never blush to acknowledge that he is in subjection to the Father of Spirits. He will rather glory in his high connection, and with reverence obey the commands of his Heavenly Parent. Remember again, we are Christ's *brethren*, and there is a debt in brotherhood. Brother owes to brother what he cannot pay until he dies. It is more than some men think to have been rocked in the same cradle and dandled on the same knee. Some esteem it nothing. Alas ! it is a well-known truth, that if you want help you must go anywhere for it save to your brother's house. Go not into thy brother's house in the day of thine adversity. Go to the greatest stranger, and he shall help thee ; go to thy brother, and he shall oft upbraid thee. But this should not be so. Brotherhood has its ties of debt, and to my brother I owe what I shall not yet pay him. Beloved, are ye brothers of Christ, and do ye think that ye owe him no love ? Are ye brothers and sisters of the saints, and think ye that ye ought not to love and serve them, even to the washing of their feet ? Oh yes, I am sure ye ought. I am afraid none of us feel enough how much we are debtors to God. Yea, I am certain that we do not. It is astonishing how much gratitude a man will feel to you if you have been only the instrument of doing him good ; but how little gratitude he feels to God, the first cause of all ! There have been many who have been won from drunkenness by hearing the preaching of God's word even under myself, and those persons have been ready to carry me on their shoulders, from very gratitude, for joy ; but I would be bound to say they make a far more feeble display of their thankfulness to my Master. At least, they seem to have lost their first love to him far sooner than they did to his servant. We remember to be grateful to all except our God. Our little debts we can pay. Debts of honour, as we call them—which are no debts in some men's eyes—we can discharge ; but the great and solemn debt we owe to God is oftentimes passed by, neglected and forgotten. “Brethren, we are debtors.”

II. In the second place, very briefly, WHAT OUGHT WE TO DRAW FROM THIS DOCTRINE, that we are debtors ?

First, we think we should learn *a lesson of humility*. If we be debtors we never

ought to be proud. All we can do for God is but a trifling acknowledgment of an infinite obligation, yea, more, our good works are gifts of his grace, and do but put us under greater debt to the author of them. Stay, then, ye who are puffed up by your achievements, consider ye have but poorly performed, not a deed of supererogation, but of ordinary duty. How much have you done, after all, young man? I thought I saw you the other day looking amazingly great, because on such an occasion you really had done some little service to Christ's church; and you looked astonishingly proud about it. Young man, didst thou do more than thou oughtest to have done? "No, I did not," you say; "I was a debtor." Then who should be proud of having paid only a part of his debt, when, after all, he owes a great deal more than he is worth? Is there anything to be proud of in having paid a farthing in the pound? I take it there is not. Let us do what we may, it is but a farthing in the pound that we shall ever be able to pay of the debt of gratitude we owe to God. It is curious to see how some men are proud of being greater debtors than others. One man has ten talents, and oh how proud he is, and how he looks down upon another who has but one, and says: "Ah, you are a mean man; I have ten talents." Well then, thou owest ten talents, and thy brother owes only one; why should you be proud that you owe more than he does? It would be a foolish pride indeed, if two prisoners in the Queen's Bench were to boast, one saying: "I owe a hundred pounds," and the other replying: "I am a greater gentleman than you are, for I owe a thousand." I have heard that in the Marshalsea of old they did take rank according to the greatness of their debts. It is often so on earth: we take rank at times according to the greatness of our talents. But the greatness of our talents is only the amount of our debt; for, the more we have, the more we owe. If a man walk the streets, sticking his bill upon his breast, and proclaiming with pride that is a debtor, you would say, "Sure he must be a madman; lock him up." And so, if a man walk through the earth and lift up his head because of what God has given him, and say, "I am not to notice the poor, I am not to shake hands with the ignorant, because I am so great and mighty," you may with equal reason say, "Take away that poor creature, his pride is his insanity; put him in safe custody, and let him learn that all he has is his debt, and that he has no cause for pride."

Then again, *how zealous we should be for our Master!* Though we cannot pay all, we can at least acknowledge the debt. It is something on the part of a debtor if he will but acknowledge the claim of his creditor. Oh! how ought we day by day to seek, by living unto God, to acknowledge the debt we owe to him; and, if we cannot pay him the principal, yet to give him some little interest upon the talent which he has lent to us, and upon those stupendous mercies which he has granted to us. I beseech you, my dear friends, take this thought with you wherever you go: "I am a debtor, I must serve my God. It is not left to my pleasure whether I will do it or no; but I am a debtor, and I *must* serve him."

If we all believed this, how much easier it would be to get our churches into good order! I go to one brother, and I say, "Brother, there is such-and-such an office in the Sabbath-school; will you take it?" "Well, sir, you know how much I love the cause, and how earnest I am in doing everything that I can to serve my Maker; but

(now comes the end of it all) I really work so hard all the week that I cannot afford to go out on the Sabbath to Sunday-schools." There you see, that man does not know that he is a debtor. I take him a bill to-morrow morning, and he says, "Do you come begging?" I say, "No; I have brought a bill; look at it." "Oh yes," he says, "I see; there is the cash." Now that is the way to act; to feel and acknowledge that you are a debtor; when there is a thing to be done, to do it, and to say, "Do not thank me for it; I have only done what I ought to have done; I have only paid the debt that I owed."

Then let me give you just one piece of homely advice before I send you away. Be just before you are generous, and especially before you are generous to yourselves. Take care that you pay your debts before you spend money upon your pleasures. I would recommend that to many Christians. Now, there are some of you here incommoding us to night, and making us very hot. You have been very generous to yourselves by coming here, but not very just to your ministers in neglecting the places of worship where you ought to have gone. You said to yourselves, "We have no doubt we ought to be there; that is our debt; nevertheless we should like to gratify our curiosity for once, by hearing this singular preacher, who will be sure to say something extravagant that will furnish the occasion for a joke for the next fortnight." Now, why did you come here till you had paid your debt? You should have rallied round your own minister and strengthened his hands in the work of the Lord. Again; how many a man is there who says, "I want such-and-such a luxury; I know the cause of God demands of me more than I give it, but I *must* have that luxury; that shilling shall go to myself, and not to God. Now if you had a debtor who owed you more than he could pay, and you saw him going off on pleasure in a horse and gig to-morrow, you would say, "It is all very well his having that fine horse and gig, and going down to Greenwich; but I would rather that he should pay me the ten pound note I lent him the other day. If he cannot afford to pay, he ought to keep at home till he can." So in regard to God. We come and spend our time and our money upon our pleasures before we pay our just and fair debts. Now, what is not right towards man is not right towards God. If it is robbing man to spend the money in pleasure wherewith we ought to pay our debts; it is robbing God if we employ our time, our talents, or our money in anything but his service, until we feel that we have done our share in that service. I beseech you, members of churches, deacons, or whatever you may be, lay this to heart. To God's cause you are debtors. Do not expect to get thanked at last for doing much, for after all you have done, you will only have done what is your duty.

Now, farewell to such of you as are debtors in that sense; but just one word to those who are debtors in the other sense. Sinner, thou who owest to God's justice, thou who hast never been pardoned; what wilt thou do when pay-day comes? My friend over there, you who have run up a score of black sins, what will you do when pay-day comes, and no Christ to pay your debts with? What will you do if you are out of God and out of Christ at the last pay-day, when the whole roll of your debts to God shall be opened, and you have no Christ to give you a discharge? I beseech thee, "Agree with thy creditor quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him; lest he deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer to cast thee into prison: verily I say unto thee, thou shalt not come out till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." But if thou agreeest with thy creditor, he will, for Jesus' sake, blot out all thy debts and set thee at liberty, so that thou shalt never be amenable for thine iniquities.

The New Park Street Pulpit.

PRIDE AND HUMILITY.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 17, 1856, BY THE

REV. C. H. SPURGEON,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

“Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility.”—
Proverbs xviii. 12.

ALMOST every event has its prophetic prelude. It is an old and common saying, that “coming events cast their shadows before them;” the wise man teaches us the same lesson in the verse before us. When destruction walks through the land, it casts its shadow; it is in the shape of pride. When honour visits a man’s house, it casts its shadow before it; it is in the fashion of humility. “Before destruction the heart of man is haughty;” pride is as surely the sign of destruction as the change of mercury in the weather-glass is the sign of rain; and far more infallibly so than that. “Before honour is humility,” even as before the summer, sweet birds return to sing in our land. Everything hath its prelude. The prelude of destruction is pride, and of honour, humility. There is nothing into which the heart of man so easily falls as pride, and yet there is no vice which is more frequently, more emphatically, and more eloquently condemned in Scripture. Against pride, prophets have lifted up their voices, evangelists have spoken, and teachers have discoursed. Yea, more; the everlasting God has mounted to the very heights of eloquence when he would condemn the pride of man; and the full gushing of the Eternal’s mighty language has been most gloriously displayed in the condemnation of the pride of human nature. Perhaps the most eloquent passage of God’s Word is to be found towards the conclusion of the book of Job, where, in most splendid strains of unanswerable eloquence, God hides pride from man by utterly confounding him; and there is another very eloquent passage in the 14th chapter of Isaiah, where the Lord’s holy choler seems to have risen up, and his anger to have waxed hot against the pride of man, when he would utterly and effectually condemn it. He says concerning the great and mighty king of Babylon, “Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms.” Mark how God addresses him, describing hell itself as being astonished at his fall, seeing that he had mounted so high; and yet declaring, assuredly, that his height and

greatness were nothing to the Almighty, that he would pull him down, even though, like an eagle, he had built his nest among the stars. I say there is nothing more eloquently condemned in Scripture than pride, and yet there is no trap into which we poor silly birds so easily flee, no pitfall into which, like foolish beasts of the earth, we so continually run. On the other hand, humility is a grace that hath many promises given to it in the Scripture. Perhaps most promises are given to faith, and love is often considered to be the brightest of the train of virtues; yet humility holds by no means an inferior place in God's word, and there are hundreds of promises linked to it. Every grace seems to be like a nail, on which, precious blessings hang, and humility hath many a mercy suspended from it. "He that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted;" "blessed are the poor in Spirit;" and in multitudes of other passages, we are reminded that God loveth the humble, but that he "bringeth down the mighty from their seats, and exalteth the humble and meek." Now, this morning, we shall have a word to say concerning *pride* and *humility*. May the Holy Spirit preserve us from the one, and produce in our hearts the other.

I. In the first place, we shall have something to say concerning the vice of *PRIDE*. "Before destruction the heart of man is haughty." *Pride, what is it?* *Pride, where is its seat?* The heart of man. And *pride, what is its consequences?* Destruction.

1. In the first place, I must try to *describe pride* to you. I might paint it as being the worst malformation of all the monstrous things in creation; it hath nothing lovely in it, nothing in proportion, but everything in disorder. It is altogether the very reverse of the creatures which God hath made, which are pure and holy. *Pride*, the first-born son of hell, is indeed like its parent, all unclean and vile, and in it there is neither form, fashion, nor comeliness.

In the first place, *pride* is a *groundless thing*. It standeth on the sands; or worse than that, it puts its foot on the billows which yield beneath its tread; or, worse still, it stands on bubbles, which soon must burst beneath its feet. Of all things *pride* has the worst foothold; it has no solid rock on earth whereon to place itself. We have reasons for almost everything, but we have no reasons for *pride*. *Pride* is a thing which should be unnatural to us, for we have nothing to be proud of. What is there in man of which he should glory? Our very creation is enough to humble us; what are we but creatures of to-day? Our frailty should be sufficient to lay us low, for we shall be gone to-morrow. Our ignorance should tend to keep *pride* from our lips. What are we, but like the wild asses colt which knoweth nothing? And our sins ought effectually to stop our mouths, and lay us in the dust. Of all things in the world, *pride* towards God, is that which hath the very least excuse; it hath neither stick nor stone whereon to build. Yet like the spider, it carrieth its own web in its bowels, and can, of itself, spin that wherewith to catch its prey. It seems to stand upon itself, for it hath nothing besides whereon it can rest. Oh! man, learn to reject *pride*, seeing that thou hast no reason for it; whatever thou art thou hast nothing to make thee proud. The more thou hast, the more thou art in debt to God; and thou shouldst not be proud of that which renders thee a debtor. Consider thine origin; look back to the hole of the pit whence thou wast digged. Consider what thou wouldst have been, even now, if it were not for Divine grace. And, consider, that thou wilt yet be lost in hell if grace does not hold thee up. Consider that amongst the damned, there are none that would have been more damned than thyself, if grace had not kept thee from destruction. Let this consideration humble thee, that thou hast nought whereon to ground thy *pride*.

Again, it is a *brainless thing* as well as a *groundless thing*; for it brings no profit

with it. There is no wisdom in a self-exaltation. Other vices have some excuse, for men seem to gain by them; avarice, pleasure, lust, have some plea; but the man who is proud sells his soul cheaply. He opens wide the flood-gates of his heart, to let men see how deep is the flood within his soul; then suddenly it floweth out, and all is gone—and all for nothing, for one puff of empty wind, one word of sweet applause—the soul is gone and not a drop is left. In almost every other sin, we gather up the ashes when the fire is gone; but here, what is left? The covetous man hath his shining gold, but what hath the proud man? He has less than he would have had without his pride, and is no gainer whatever. Oh! man, if thou wert as mighty as Gabriel, and had all his holiness, still thou wouldst be an arrant fool to be proud, for pride would sink thee from thine angel station to the rank of devils, and bring thee from the place where Lucifer, son of the morning, once dwelt, to take up thine abode with hideous fiends in perdition. Pride exalts its head, and seeks to honour itself; but it is of all things most despised. It sought to plant crowns upon its brow, and so it hath done, but its head was hot, and it put an ice crown there, and it melted all away. Poor pride has decked itself out finely sometimes; it hath put on its most gaudy apparel, and said to others, “how brilliant I appear!” But, ah! pride, like a harlequin, dressed in thy gay colours, thou art all the more fool for that; thou art but a gazing stock for fools less foolish than thyself. Thou hast no crown, as thou thinkest thou hast, nothing solid and real, all is empty and vain. If thou, O man, desirest shame, be proud. A monarch has waded through slaughter to a throne, and shut the gates of mercy on mankind to win a little glory; but when he has exalted himself, and has been proud, worms have devoured him, like Herod, or have devoured his empire, till it passed away, and with it his pride and glory. Pride wins no crowns; men never honour it, not even the menial slaves of earth; for all men look down on the proud man, and think him less than themselves.

Again, pride is *the maddest thing* that can exist; it feeds upon its own vitals; it will take away its own life, that with its blood it may make a purple for its shoulders; it sappeth, and undermineth its own house that it may build its pinnacles a little higher, and then the whole structure tumbleth down. Nothing proves men so mad as pride. For this they have given up rest, and ease, and repose, to find rank and power among men; for this they have dared to risk their hope of salvation, to leave the gentle yoke of Jesus, and go toiling wearily along the way of life, seeking to save themselves by their own works, and at last to stagger into the mire of fell despair. Oh! man, hate pride, flee from it, abhor it, let it not dwell with thee. If thou wantest to have a madman in thy heart, embrace pride, for thou shalt ne’er find one more mad than he.

Then pride is a *protean thing*; it changes its shape; it is all forms in the world; you may find it in any fashion you may choose; you may see it in the beggar’s rags as well as in the rich man’s garment. It dwells with the rich, and with the poor. The man without a shoe to his foot may be as proud as if he were riding in a chariot. Pride can be found in every rank of society—among all classes of men. Sometimes it is an Arminian, and talks about the power of the creature; then it turns Calvinist, and boasts of its fancied security—forgetful of the Maker, who alone can keep our faith alive. Pride can profess any form of religion; it may be a Quaker, and wear no collar to its coat; it may be a Churchman, and worship God in splendid cathedrals; it may be a Dissenter, and go to the common meeting-house; it is one of the most Catholic things in the world, it attends all kinds of chapels and churches; go where you will, you will see pride. It cometh up with us to the house of God; it goeth with us to our houses; it is found on the mart, and the exchange, in the

streets, and everywhere. Let me hint at one or two of the forms which it assumes. Sometimes pride takes the doctrinal shape; it teaches the doctrine of self-sufficiency; it tells us what man *can* do, and will not allow that we are lost, fallen, debased, and ruined creatures, as we are. It hates divine sovereignty, and rails at election. Then if it is driven from that, it takes another form; it allows that the doctrine of free grace is true, but it does not feel it. It acknowledges that salvation is of the Lord alone, but still it prompts men to seek heaven by their own works, even by the deeds of the law. And when driven from that, it will persuade men to join something with Christ in the matter of salvation; and when that is all rent up, and the poor rag of our righteousness is all burned, pride will get into the Christian's heart as well as the sinner's—it will flourish under the name of self-sufficiency, teaching the Christian that he is “rich and increased in goods, having need of nothing.” It will tell him that he does not need daily grace, that past experience will do for to-morrow—that he knows enough, toils enough, prays enough. It will make him forget that he has “not yet attained;” it will not allow him to press forward to the things that are before, forgetting the things that are behind. It enters into his heart, and tempts the believer to set up an independent business for himself, and until the Lord brings about a spiritual bankruptcy, pride will keep him from going to God. Pride has ten thousand shapes; it is not always that stiff and starched gentleman that you picture it; it is a vile, creeping, insinuating thing, that will twist itself like a serpent into our hearts. It will talk of humility, and prate about being dust and ashes. I have known men talk about their corruption most marvellously, pretending to be all humility, while at the same time they were the proudest wretches that could be found this side the gulf of separation. Oh! my friends, ye cannot tell how many shapes pride will assume; look sharp about you, or you will be deceived by it, and when you think you are entertaining angels, you will find you have been receiving devils unawares.

2. Now, I have to speak of *the seat of pride*—the heart. The true throne of pride everywhere, is the heart of man. If, my dear friends, we desire, by God's grace, to put down pride, the only way is to begin with the heart. Now let me tell you a parable, in the form of an eastern story, which will set this truth in its proper light. A wise man in the east, called a dervish, in his wanderings, came suddenly upon a mountain, and he saw beneath his feet a smiling valley, in the midst of which there flowed a river. The sun was shining on the stream, and the water as it reflected the sunlight, looked pure and beautiful. When he descended, he found it was muddy, and the water utterly unfit for drinking. Hard by he saw a young man, in the dress of a shepherd, who was with much diligence filtering the water for his flocks. At one moment he placed some of the water in a pitcher, and then allowing it to stand, after it had settled, he poured the clean fluid into a cistern. Then, in another place, he would be seen turning aside the current for a little, and letting it ripple over the sand and the stones, that it might be filtered and the impurities removed. The dervish watched the young man endeavouring to fill a large cistern with clear water; and he said to him, “My son, why all this toil? what purpose dost thou answer by it?” The young man replied, “Father, I am a shepherd; this water is so filthy that my flock will not drink of it, and, therefore, I am obliged to purify it, little by little, so I collect enough in this way that they may drink, but it is hard work.” So saying, he wiped the sweat from his brow, for he was exhausted with his toil. “Right well hast thou laboured,” said the wise man, “but dost thou know thy toil is not well applied? With half the labour thou mightest attain a better end. I should conceive that the source of this stream must be impure and polluted; let us take a pilgrimage together and see.” They then walked some miles, climbing

their way over many a rock, until they came to a spot where the stream took its rise. When they came near to it, they saw flocks of wild fowls flying away, and wild beasts of the earth rushing into the forest; these had come to drink, and had soiled the water with their feet. They found an open well, which kept continually flowing, but by reason of these creatures, which perpetually disturbed it, the stream was always turbid and muddy. "My son," said the wise man, "set to work now to protect the fountain and guard the well, which is the source of this stream; and when thou hast done that, if thou canst keep these wild beasts and fowls away, the stream will flow of itself, all pure and clear, and thou wilt have no longer need for thy toil." The young man did it, and as he laboured, the wise man said to him, "My son, hear the word of wisdom; if thou art wrong, seek not to correct thine outward life, but seek first to get thy heart correct, for out of it are the issues of life, and thy life shall be pure when once thy heart is so." So if we would get rid of pride, we should not proceed to arrange our dress by adopting some special costume, or to qualify our language, by using an outlandish tongue, but let us seek of God that he would purify our hearts from pride, and then assuredly if pride is purged from the heart, our life also shall be humble. Make the tree good, and then the fruit shall be good; make the fountain pure, and the stream shall be sweet. Oh! that God might grant us all, by his grace, that our hearts may be kept with diligence, so that pride may never enter there lest we be haughty in our hearts, and find that afterwards cometh wrath.

3. This brings me to the other point, which is, *the consequence of pride*—destruction, a fact which we can prove by hundreds of instances in Scripture. When men have become proud, destruction has come upon them. See you yon bright angel chanting the loud anthem of praise before his Maker's throne? Can anything tarnish that angel's glory, rob him of his harp, despoil him of his crown? Yes, see there enters a destroyer whose name is pride. He assaults the angel, and his harp-strings are snapped in twain. His crown is taken from his brow, and his glory is departed, and yon falling spirit descending into hell is he who once was Lucifer, son of the morning. He has now become Father of nights, even the Lord of Darkness, Satan, the fallen one. See you again that happy pair walking in the midst of luscious fruits, and flowery walks and bowers of Paradise? Can ought spoil Eden, and ruin those happy beings? Yes, pride comes in the shape of a serpent, and asks them to seek to be as gods. They eat of the forbidden fruit, and pride withers their paradise and blasts their Eden. Out they go to till the ground, whence they were taken, to beget and to bring forth us who are their children—sons of toil and sorrow. Do you see that man after God's own heart, continually singing his Maker's praise? Can aught make him sad? Can you suppose that he shall ever be laid prostrate on the earth, groaning, and crying, and asking "that the bones which God hath broken may rejoice?" Yes, pride can do that. It will put into his heart that he will number his people, that he will count the tribes of Israel, to show how great and mighty is his empire. It is done, and a terrible pestilence sweeps o'er his land on account of his pride. Let David's aching heart show how destruction comes to a man's glory when he once begins to make a God of it. See that other good and holy man who, like David, was much after God's own heart. He is rich and increased in goods. The Babylonian ambassadors are come, and he shows them all he has. Do you not hear that threatening, "Thy treasures shall be carried away, and thy sons and thy daughters shall be servants to the king of Babylon?" The destruction of Hezekiah's wealth must come, because he is proud thereof. But for the most notable instance of all, let me show you yonder palace, perhaps the most magnificent which has even yet been built. In it there walks one who, lifting up his head on high, as if he were more than mortal man, exclaims, "See ye this great Babylon that I have builded?" Oh! pride, what hast thou done? thou hast more power than a wizard's wand! Mark the mighty builder of Babylon creeping on the earth. Like oxen he is devouring grass; his nails have grown like birds' claws, his hair like eagles' feathers, and his heart has gone from him. Pride did all that, that it may be fulfilled which God hath written, "Before destruction the heart of man is haughty."

Is thine heart haughty, *sinner*, this morning? dost thou despise God's sovereignty? wilt thou not submit thyself to Christ's yoke? dost thou seek to weave a righteousness of thine own? art thou seeking to be or to do something? art thou desirous of being great and mighty in thine own esteem? Hear me then, *sinner*, destruction is coming upon thee. As truly as ever thou exaltest thyself, thou shalt be abased; thy

destruction, in the fullest and blackest sense of the word, is hurrying on to overwhelm thee. And oh! Christian, is thine heart haughty this morning? art thou come here glorying in thy graces? art thou proud of thyself, that thou hast had such high frames and such sweet experiences? Mark thee, brother, there is a destruction coming to thee also. Some of thy proud things will be pulled up by the roots, some of thy graces will be shattered, and thy good works, perhaps, will become loathsome to thee, and thou wilt abhor thyself in dust and ashes. As truly as ever thou exaltest thyself, there will be a destruction come to thee, O saint—the destruction of thy joys and of thy comforts, though there can be no destruction of thy soul.

Pride, you know, is most likely to meet with destruction, because it is too tall to walk upright. It is most likely to tumble down, because it is always looking upward in its ambition, and never looks to its feet. There only needs to be a pitfall in the way, or even a stone, and down it goes. It is sure to tumble, because it is never contented with being where it is. It is always seeking to be climbing, and boys that will climb must expect to fall. Pride is foolhardy, and will venture upon scaling any rock. Sometimes it holds on by a brier, and that pricks it; sometimes by a flint, and that cuts it. There it goes, toiling and labouring on, till it gets as high as it can, and then, from its very height, it is likely to fall. Nature itself tells us to avoid high things. Who is he that can stand upon an eminence without a reeling brain, and without a temptation to cast himself down? Pride, when most successful, stands in slippery places. Who would choose to dwell on a pinnacle of the temple? That is where pride has built its house, and verily it seems but natural that pride should down if pride will up. God will carry out this saying, “Before destruction, the heart of man is haughty.” Yet, beloved, I am persuaded that all I can say to you, or to myself, can never keep pride from us. The Lord alone can bolt the door of the heart against pride. Pride is like the flies of Egypt; all Pharaoh’s soldiers could not keep them out; and I am sure all the strong resolutions and devout aspirations we may have cannot keep pride out unless the Lord God Almighty sends a strong wind of his Holy Spirit to sweep it away.

II. Now, let us consider briefly the last part of the text, “*BEFORE HONOUR IS HUMILITY.*” So then, you see our heavenly Father does not say that we are not to have honour. He has not forbidden it; he has only forbidden us to be proud of it. A good man may have honour in this life. Daniel had honour before the people; Joseph rode in the second chariot, and the people bowed the knee before him. God often clothes his children with honour in the face of their adversaries, and makes the wicked confess that the Lord is with them in deed and in truth. But God forbids our making that honour a cloak for pride, and bids us seek humility which always accompanies as well as precedes true honour.

1. Now let us briefly enquire, in the first place, *what is humility?* The best definition I have ever met with is, “to think rightly of ourselves.” Humility is to make a right estimate of one’s-self. It is no humility for a man to think less of himself than he ought, though it might rather puzzle him to do that. Some persons, when they know they can do a thing, tell you they cannot; but you do not call that humility. A man is asked to take part in some meeting. “No,” he says, “I have no ability;” yet, if you were to say so yourself, he would be offended at you. It is not humility for a man to stand up and depreciate himself, and say he cannot do this, that, or the other, when he knows that he is lying. If God gives a man a talent, do you think the man does not know it? If a man has ten talents, he has no right to be dishonest to his Maker, and to say, “Lord, thou hast only given me five.” It is not humility to underrate yourself. Humility is to think of yourself, if you can, as God thinks of you. It is to feel that if we have talents, God has given them to us, and let it be seen that, like freight in a vessel, they tend to sink us low. The more we have, the lower we ought to lie. Humility is not to say, “I have not this gift,” but it is to say, “I have the gift, and I must use it for my Master’s glory. I must never seek any honour for myself, for what have I that I have not received?” But, beloved, humility is to feel ourselves lost, ruined, and undone. To be killed by the same hand which, afterwards, makes us alive, to be ground to pieces as to our own doings and willings, to know and trust in none but Jesus, to be brought to feel and sing,—

“Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling.”

Humility is to feel that we have no power of ourselves, but that it all cometh from God. Humility is to lean on our beloved, to believe that he has trodden the wine-press alone, to lie on his bosom and slumber sweetly there, to exalt him, and think less than nothing of ourselves. It is, in fact, to annihilate self, and to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ as all in all.

2. Now, what is *the seat or throne of humility*? The throne of humility must be the heart. I do hate, of all things, that humility which lives in the face. There are some persons who always seem to be so very humble when you are with them, but you can discover there is something underneath it all, and when they are in some other society, they will brag and say how you told them your whole heart. Take heed of the men who allow you to lay your head in their lap and betray you into the hands of the Philistines. I have met with such persons. I remember a man who used to pray with great apparent humility, and then would go and abuse the servants, and make a noise with all his farming men. He was the stiffest and proudest man in the church, yet he invariably used to tell the Lord, in prayer, that he was nothing but dust and ashes, that he laid his hand on his lip, and his mouth in the dust, and cried, "Unclean, unclean." Indeed he talked of himself in the most despairing way, but I am sure if God had spoken to him, he must have said, "O, thou that liest before my throne, thou sayest this, but thou dost not feel it; for thou wilt go thy way and take thy brother by the throat, exalt thyself above all thy fellow-creatures, and be a very Diotrophes in the church, and a Herod in the world." I dislike that humility which rests in outward things. There is a kind of oily, sanctimonious, proud humility, which is not the genuine article, though it is sometimes extremely like it. You may be deceived by it once or twice, but by-and-bye you discover that it is a wolf dexterously covered with sheep's clothing. It arrayeth itself in the simplest dress in the world; it talks in the gentlest and humblest style; it says, "We must not intrude our own peculiar sentiments, but must always walk in love and charity." But after all, what is it? It is charitable to all except those who hold God's truth, and it is humble to all when it is forced to be humble. It is like one of whom, I daresay, you have read in your childish books,—

"So, stooping down, as needs he must,
Who cannot stand upright."

True humility does not continually talk about "dust and ashes," and prate about its infirmities, but *it feels* all that which others say, for it possesses an inwrought feeling of its own nothingness.

Very likely the most humble man in the world won't bend to anybody. John Knox was a truly humble man, yet if you had seen him march before Queen Mary with the Bible in his hand, to reprove her, you would have rashly said, "What a proud man!"

Cringing men that bow before everybody, are truly proud men; but humble men are those who think themselves so little, they do not think it worth while to stoop to serve themselves. Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, were humble men, for they did not think there lives were worth enough to save them by a sin. Daniel was a humble man; he did not think his place, his station, his whole self, worth enough to save them by leaving off prayer. Humility is a thing which must be genuine; the imitation of it is the nearest thing in the world to pride. Seek of God, dear friends, the gift of true humility. Seek to have that breaking in pieces by the Holy Spirit, that breaking in the mortar with the pestle which God himself gives to his children. Seek that every twig of his rod may drive pride out of you, so that by the blueness of the wound, your soul may be made better. Seek of him, if he does not show you the chambers of imagery within your own heart, that he may take you to Calvary, and that he may show you his brightness and his glory, that you may be humble before him. Never ask to be a mean, cringing, fawning thing; ask God to make you a man—those are scarce things now-a-days—a man who only fears God, who knows no fear of any other kind. Do not give yourselves up to any man's power, or guidance, or rule, but ask of God that you may have that humility towards him, which gives you the noble bearing of a Christian before others. Some think that ministers are proud when they resent any interference with their ministry. I consider they would be proud if they allowed it for the sake of peace, which

is only another word for their own self-seeking. It is a great mercy when God gives a man to be free from everybody, when he can go into his pulpit, careless of what others may think of him. I conceive that a minister should be like a lighthouse keeper; he is out at sea, and nobody can suggest to him that he had better light his candles a little later, or anything of the kind. He knows his duty, and he keeps his lamps burning; if he were to follow the opinions of the people on shore, his light might be extinguished altogether. It is a merciful providence that they cannot get to him, so he goes on easily, obeys his regulations as he reads them, and cares little for other people's interpretation. So a minister should not be a weather-cock, that is turned by the wind, but he should be one who turns the wind; not one who is ruled by others, but one who knows how to stand firm and fast, and keep his light burning, trusting always in God; believing, that if God has raised him up, he will not desert him, but will teach him by his Holy Spirit, without the ever-changing advice of men.

3. Now, in the last place, *what comes of humility?* "Before honour is humility." Humility is the herald which ushers in the great king; it walks before honour; and he who has humility, will have honour afterwards. I will only apply this spiritually. Have you been brought to-day to feel, that in yourself you are less than nothing, and vanity? Art thou humbled in the sight of God, to know thine own unworthiness, thy fallen estate in Adam, and the ruin thou hast brought upon thyself, by thine own sins? Hast thou been brought to feel thyself incapable of working out thy own salvation, unless God shall work in thee, to will and to do of his own good pleasure? Hast thou been brought to say, "Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner?" Well, then, as true as the text is in the Bible, thou shalt have honour by-and-bye. "Such honour have all the saints." Thou shalt have honour soon to be washed from all thy guilt; thou shalt have honour soon to be clothed in the robes of Jesus, in the royal garments of the King; thou shalt have honour soon to be adopted into his family, to be received amongst the blood-washed ones who have been justified by faith. Thou shalt have honour to be borne, as on eagles' wings, to be carried across the river, and at last to sing his praise, who has been the "death of deaths, and hell's destruction." Thou shalt have honour to wear the crown, and wave the palm one day, for thou hast now that humility which comes from God. You may fear that because you are now humbled by God, you must perish. I beseech you do not think so; as truly as ever the Lord has humbled you, he will exalt you. And the more you are brought low, the less hope you have of mercy; the more you are in the dust, so much the more reason you have to hope. So far from the bottom of the sea being a place over which we cannot be carried to heaven, it is one of the nearest places to heaven's gate. And if thou art brought to the very lowest place to which even Jonah descended, thou art so much the nearer being accepted. The more thou knowest thy vileness; remember the blacker, the more filthy, the more unworthy thou art in thine own esteem, so much the more right hast thou to expect that thou wilt be saved. Verily, honour shall come after humility. Humble souls, rejoice; proud souls, go on in your proud ways, but know that they end in destruction. Climb up the ladder of your pride, you shall fall over on the other side and be dashed to pieces. Ascend the steep hill of your glory; the higher you climb the more terrible will be your fall. For know you this, that against none hath the Lord Almighty bent his bow more often, and against none has he shot his arrows more furiously, than against the proud and mighty man that exalteth himself. Bow down, O man, bow down; "kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

Just Published—

A REPLY to the Correspondent of the *Daily News*, in reference to his remarks on the Extraordinary Sayings and Doings of the Rev. C. H. SPURGEON at Exeter Hall and New Park Street, Chapel, Southwark.—By a Daily Observer. *Price One Penny.*

The New Park Street Pulpit.

MAKING LIGHT OF CHRIST.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, AUGUST 17, 1856, BY THE

REV. C. H. SPURGEON,

AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

"But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise,"—
Matthew xxii. 5.

MAN is not much changed since the days of Adam. In his bodily frame he appears to be exactly similar, for skeletons many hundred years old are the exact counterparts of ours; and sure enough that which was recorded in history as having been done by man centuries ago, might be written again, for "there is nothing new under the sun." The same class of men are still to be discovered (although, perhaps, differently dressed) as those who existed ages long gone by. There are still men who answer the character given to others, in his day, by the Saviour. They "Go their way, one to his farm, another to his merchandise," making light of the glorious things of the gospel. I am certain I have many such characters here to-night, and I pray the Lord that I may be enabled to discourse to them very solemnly and very pointedly. And I must ask of all of you who understand the heavenly art of prayer, to pray that God would be pleased to send home every thought into the breast where he intends it to lodge, that it may bring forth the comfortable fruit of righteousness in the salvation of many souls. "They made light of it;" so do too many in this day; and so will a large proportion of my hearers to-night. I believe that to think lightly of Christ is a sin; and at all risks of being falsely called legalist, or free-willer, by those who are wise above what is written, I shall charge it upon you as such, for I hope I shall never belong to that class of Calvinists who do the devil's work by excusing sinners in their sins.

In the first place, we shall have a few words with you, concerning *what it is that the sinner makes light of*; secondly, *how it is that he makes light of it*; and thirdly, *why it is that he makes light of it*. Then a general observation or two, and we shall not weary you.

I. In the first place, WHAT IS IT THAT THE SINNER MAKES LIGHT OF? According to the parable, the persons alluded to made light of a marriage banquet which a king had provided, with all kinds of dainties, to which they were freely invited, and from which they wilfully absented themselves. The spiritual meaning of this is easy to discover. Sinners who make light of Christ express their contempt of a glorious banquet which God has provided at the marriage of his son. This is solemn ground to tread upon. Oh! for the teachings of the Holy Spirit.

Taking this parable as the basis of our remarks, we may observe, first, that the sinner makes light of *the messenger who brings him the news that the marriage supper is prepared*. These men refused to come; they went—"One to his farm, another to his merchandise," and so made light of the messenger; and every sinner who neglects the great salvation of Jesus Christ, makes light of the gospel minister, which is no little insult in God's esteem. It is never reckoned a small offence by our great

nation, if our ambassador is treated with indifference; and take it for a truth, it is no light thing with God if you despise the ambassadors he sends to you. But this is comparatively little; the ambassadors are men like yourselves, who can well afford to be contemned, if that were all. In fact, we should be glad enough to forgive you if it were in our power to do so, and if this were all your guilt.

But these people *despised the feast*. Some of them fancied that the fatlings, and other provisions that would be upon the table, would be no better than what they had at home. They thought that the royal banquet would be no very great thing for which to give up their merchandise for a day, or to renounce their farming even for an hour. They scorned the banquet, at least, it appears so, because they did not go to it. Oh! sinner, when thou neglectest the great salvation, remember what thou dost despise; when thou makest light of God's gospel, thou makest light of justification by faith; thou makest light of washing in the blood of Jesus; thou makest light of the Holy Spirit; thou makest light of the road to heaven; and then thou makest light of faith, and hope, and love; thou makest light of all the promises of the eternal covenant, of all the glorious things that God has laid up for them that love him, and of everything which he hath revealed in his word as being the promised gift to those who come unto him. It is a solemn thing to make light of the gospel, for in that word, God's spell—good tidings, is summed up all that human nature can require, and all that even the saints in bliss can receive. Oh! to despise the gospel of the blessed God, how mad! how worse than folly! Despise the stars, and thou art a fool; despise God's earth, with its glorious mountains, with its flowing rivers and its fair meads, and thou art a maniac; but despise God's gospel, and thou art ten thousand maniacs in one. Make light of that, and thou art far more foolish than he who sees no light in the sun, who beholds no fairness in the moon, and no brilliancy in the starry firmament. Trample, if you please, his lower works; but oh! remember, when you make light of the gospel, you are making light of the masterpiece of your great Creator—that which cost him more than to create a myriad worlds—the bloody purchase of our Saviour's agonies.

And, again, these people *made light of the King's Son*. It was *his* marriage, and inasmuch as they absented themselves, they did dishonour to that glorious One in whose honour the supper was prepared. They slighted him whom his Father loved. Ah! sinner, when thou makest light of the gospel, thou makest light of Christ—of that Christ before whom glorious cherubs bow themselves—of that Christ at whose feet the high archangel thinks it happiness to cast his crown; thou makest light of him with whose praise the vault of heaven rings; thou makest light of him whom God makes much of, for he has called him, "God over all, blessed for ever." Ah! it is a solemn thing to make light of Christ. Despise a prince, and ye shall have little honour at the king's hand for it; but despise the Son of God, and the Father will have vengeance on you for his slighted son. Oh! my dear friends, it seems to me to be a sin, not unpardonable, I know, but still most heinous, that men should ever despise my blessed Lord Jesus Christ and treat him with cruel scorn. Make light of thee, sweet Jesus? Oh! when I see thee with thy shirt of gore, wrestling in Gethsemane, I bow myself o'er thee, and I say, "O, Redeemer, bleeding for sin, can any sinner make light of thee?" When I behold him with a river of blood rolling down his shoulder, beneath the cursed flagellation of Pilate's whip, I ask, "Can a sinner make light of such a Saviour as this?" And when I see him yonder, covered with his blood, nailed to a tree, expiring in torture, shrieking, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani," I ask myself, "Can any make light of this?" Ay, if they do, then, indeed, it were sin enough to damn them, if they have no other sin—that they have lightly esteemed the Prince of peace, who is glorious and altogether lovely. Oh! my friend, if thou makest light of Christ, thou hast insulted the only one who can save thee—the only one who can bear thee across the Jordan—the only one who can unbolt the gates of heaven, and give thee welcome. Let no preacher of smooth things persuade thee that this is not crime. O, sinner, think of thy sin, if thou art making light of him; for then art thou making light of the King's only Son.

And yet, again, these people *made light also of the King* who had prepared the banquet. Ah! little dost thou know, O sinner, when thou dost trifle with the gospel, that thou art insulting God. I have heard some say, "Sir, I do not believe in Christ, but still I am sure I try to reverence God; I do not care about the gospel, I do not wish to be washed in Jesu's blood, nor to be saved in free-grace fashion; but I

do not despise God; I am a natural religionist!" Nay, sir, but thou dost insult the Almighty, inasmuch as thou dost deny his Son. Despise a man's offspring, and thou hast insulted the man himself; reject the only begotten Son of God, and thou hast rejected the eternal One himself. There is no such thing as true natural religion apart from Christ; it is a lie and a falsehood; it is the refuge of a man who is not brave enough to say he hates God, but it is only a refuge of lies, for he who denieth Christ in that act offendeth God, and shutteth up heaven's gates against himself. There is no loving the Father except through the Son; and there is no acceptable worship of the Father except through the Great High Priest the Mediator, Jesus Christ. Oh! my friend, remember, thou hast not merely despised the gospel, but thou hast despised the gospel's God. In laughing at the doctrines of revelation, thou hast laughed at God; in reviling the truth of the gospel, thou hast reviled God himself; thou hast bent thy fist in the face of the Eternal; thine oaths have not fallen upon the Church, they have fallen upon God himself. Oh! remember, ye that mock at the message of Christ! Oh! remember, ye that turn away from the ministry of truth! God is a mighty one: how severely *can* he punish! God is a jealous God: oh! how severely *will* he punish! Make light of God, sinner? Why, this above all things is a damning sin, and in committing it, it may be thou wilt one day sign thine own death-warrant; for making light of God, of Christ, and of his holy gospel, is destroying one's own soul, and rushing headlong to perdition. Ah! unhappy souls, most unhappy must ye be, if ye live and die making light of Christ, and preferring your farms and your merchandise to the treasures of the gospel.

Again: bethink thee, my poor, pitiable friend, in that thou makest light of all the things I have mentioned, *thou art making light of the great solemnities of eternity*. The man who lightly esteems the gospel makes light of hell; he thinks its fires are not hot, and its flames not such as Christ has described them: he makes light of the burning tears that scald despairing cheeks for ever; he makes light of the yells and shrieks that must be the doleful songs and terrible music of perishing souls. Ah! it is no wise thing to make light of hell.

Consider again: thou makest light of heaven—that place to which the blest ones long to go, where glory reigns without a cloud, and bliss without a sigh. Thou putt'st the crown of everlasting life beneath thy feet; thou treadest the palm-branch beneath thine unhallowed foot, and thou thinkest it little to be saved, and little to be glorified. Ah! poor soul, when thou art once in hell, and when the iron key is turned for ever in the lock of inevitable destiny, thou wilt find hell to be a something not so easy to despise; and when thou hast lost heaven and all its bliss, and canst only hear the song of the blessed, sounding faintly in the distance, increasing thy misery by contrast with their joy, then thou wilt find it no little thing to have made light of heaven. Every man who makes light of religion makes light of these things. He misjudges the value of his own soul, and the importance of its eternal state.

This is what men make light of. "Oh! sir," says one, "I never indulge in any words hostile to God's truth, I never laugh at the minister, nor do I despise the Sabbath." Stop, my friend, I will acquit thee of all that; and yet I will solemnly lay to thy charge this great sin of making light of the gospel. Hear me then!

II. HOW IS IT THAT MEN MAKE LIGHT OF IT?

In the first place, it is making light of the gospel and of the whole of God's glorious things, *when men go to hear and yet do not attend*. How many frequent churches and chapels to indulge in a comfortable nap! Think what a fearful insult that is to the King of heaven. Would they enter into Her Majesty's palace, ask an audience, and then go to sleep before her face! And yet the sin of sleeping in Her Majesty's presence would not be so great, even against her laws, as the sin of wilfully slumbering in God's sanctuary. How many go to our houses of worship who do not sleep, but who sit with vacant stare, listening as they would to a man who could play a lively tune upon a good instrument. What goeth in at one ear goeth out at another. Whatever entereth the brain goeth out without ever affecting the heart. Ah, my hearers, you are guilty of making light of God's gospel, when you sit under a sermon without attending to it! Oh! what would lost souls give to hear another sermon! What would yonder dying wretch who is just now nearing the grave, give for another Sabbath! And what will you give, one of these days, when you shall be hard by Jordan's brink, that you might

have one more warning, and listen once more to the wooing voice of God's minister! We make light of the gospel when we hear it, without solemn and awful attention to it.

But some say they *do* attend. Well, it is possible to attend to the gospel, and yet to make light of it. I have seen some men weep beneath a powerful sermon; I have marked the tears chase each other—tears, blessed tell-tales of emotions within. I have sometimes said to myself, it is marvellous to see these people weep under some telling word from God, which is alarming them, as if Sinai itself were thundering in their ears. But there is something more marvellous than men's weeping under the word. It is the fact that they soon, too soon, wipe all their tears away. But ah! my dear hearer, recollect that if thou hearest of these things and shakest off a solemn impression, thou art, in doing that, slighting God and making light of his truth; and take heed how you do that, lest your own garments be red with the blood of your soul, and it be said, "Oh, Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself."

But there are others who make light of it in a different fashion. They have the word and attend to it; but, alas! *they attend to something else with it.*

Oh! my hearer, thou makest light of Christ, if thou puttest him anywhere save in the centre of thine heart. He who gives Christ a little of his affections, makes light of Christ; for Christ will have the whole heart, or none at all. He who gives Christ a portion, and the world a portion, despises Christ, for he seems to think that Christ does not deserve to have the whole. And inasmuch as he says that, or thinks that, he hath mean and unholy thoughts of Christ. Oh! carnal man, thou who art half religious, and half profane; thou who art sometimes serious, but as often frivolous; sometimes apparently pious, but yet so often unholy, thou makest light of Christ. And ye who weep on the Sunday, and then go back to your sins on the Monday; ye who set the world and its pleasures before Christ, ye think less of him than he deserves; and what is that but to make light of him? Oh! I charge you, ask yourself, my hearer, this night art not thou the man? dost not thou thyself make light of Christ? The self-righteous man who sets himself up as partner with Christ in the matter of salvation, notwithstanding all his trumpery good works, is such a ring-leader among despisers, that I would gibbet him in the very middle of them, and bid all like him tremble, lest they also be found slighers of Jesus.

He makes light of Christ, again, *who makes a profession of religion, and yet does not live up to it.* Ah! church members, ye want a great deal of sifting; we have an immense quantity of chaff now mixed with the wheat; and sometimes I think we have something worse than that. We have some in our churches that are not so good as chaff, for they do not seem to have been near the wheat at all; they are nothing better than tares. They have come into our churches, just as they would into a trade-association, because they think it will improve their business. It gives respectability to their name to take the sacrament; it makes them esteemed to have been baptized, or to be a member of a Christian church; and so they come in by shoals after the loaves and fishes, but not after Jesus Christ. Ah! hypocrite, thou makest light of Christ if thou thinkest that he is a stalking horse to get thee wealth. If thou drestest that thou art to bridle and saddle Christ, and ride to wealth upon him, thou makest a grand mistake, for he was never meant to carry man anywhere except to heaven. If you suppose that religion was intended to gild your homes, to carpet your floors, and line your purses, you have greatly erred. It was intended to be profitable to the soul, and he who thinks to use religion to his own personal advantage thinks lightly of Christ; and at the last day this crime shall be laid to his charge—that he has "made light of it;" and the King shall send his armies to cut him in pieces, among those who have despised his Majesty, and would not obey his laws.

III. And now, in the third place, I will tell you WHY THEY MADE LIGHT OF IT. They did so from different reasons.

Some of them made light of it *because they were ignorant*, they did not know how good the feast was; they did not know how gracious the King was; they did not know how fair the Prince was, or else they might have thought differently. Now, there are many present to-night, I daresay, who think lightly of the gospel, because they do not understand it. I have often heard people laugh at religion; but ask them what it is, and they know no more about religion than a horse, and worse than that, for they believe untruths about it, and a horse does not do that. They laugh at it, simply because they do not comprehend it; it is a thing beyond

them. We have heard of a foolish man who, whenever he heard a piece of Latin mentioned, laughed at it, because he thought it was a joke, at any rate it was a very outlandish way of talking—and so he laughed. So it is with many when they hear the gospel; they do not know what it is, and so they laugh at it. "Oh!" they say, "the man is mad." But why is he mad? Because you do not understand him. Are you so conceited as to suppose that all wisdom and all learning must rest with you? I would hint to you, that the madness is on the other side. And though you may say of him, "Much learning hath made thee mad;" we would reply, "it is quite as easy to be made mad with none at all." And those who have none, and especially those who have no knowledge of Christ, are the most likely to despise him. Well did Watts say,—

"His worth, if all the nations knew,
Sure, the whole earth would love him too."

Oh! dear friends, if you once knew what a blessed master Christ is, if you once knew what a blessed thing the gospel is, if you could once be brought to believe what a blessed God our God is, if you could only have one hour's enjoyment such as the Christian experiences, if you could only have one promise applied to your heart, you would never make light of the gospel again. Oh! you say you do not like it! Why, you have never tried it! Should a man despise the wine of which he has never sipped. It may be sweeter than he dreams? Oh! taste, and see that the Lord is good; and so sure as ever you taste, you will see his goodness. I will venture to say, again, that there are many who make light of the gospel, simply through ignorance; and if that is so, I am somewhat in hopes that when they are a little enlightened by sitting under the word, the Lord may be pleased graciously to bring them to himself; and then I know they will never make light of Christ again. Oh! do not be ignorant, "for that the soul be without knowledge is not good." Seek to know him, whom to know aright is life eternal; and when you know him, you will never make light of him.

Other people make light of it *because of pride*. "What is the good," said one, "of bringing me that invitation? Step into my house, my man, I will show you a feast quite as good as any you can tell me of. Look here! there is good cheer for you; my table is as well spread as any man's, begging his Majesty's pardon, the King cannot give a better feast than I; and I don't see why I should drag my bones about to get nothing better than I can get at home." So he would not go, out of pride. And so with some of you. *You* want to be washed! No, you were never filthy; were you? *You* need to be forgiven! Oh no! you are rather too good for that. Why, you are so awfully pious in your own conceit, that if it were all true, you would make even the angel Gabriel blush to think of you. You don't think even an angel capable of holding a candle to you. What! you seek for mercy? It is an insult to you. "Go and tell the drunkard," you say, "go and fetch the harlot; but I am a respectable man; I always go to church or chapel; I am a very good sort of fellow; I may frolic now and then, but I make it up some other day; I am sometimes a little slack, but then I rein the horses in, and make up the distance afterwards; and I daresay I shall get to heaven as soon as anybody else. I am a very good sort." Well, my friend, I do not wonder that you despise the gospel, for the gospel just tells you that you are entirely lost. It tells you that your very righteousness is full of sin. That as for any hope of your being saved by it, you might as well try to sail across the Atlantic on a sere leaf as try to get to heaven by your righteousness. And as for it being a garment fit to cover you, you might as well get a spider's web to go to court in, and think it a dress fit to appear in before Her Majesty. Ah! my hearer, I know why thou despisest Christ; it is because of thy satanic pride. May the Lord pull the pride out of thee; for if he do not, it will be the faggot that shall roast thy soul for ever. Take heed of pride; by pride fell the angels—how can men, then, though the image of their Maker, hope to win by it? Shun it, flee from it; for so sure as thou art proud, wilt thou incur the guilt of making light of Christ.

Perhaps quite as many made light of the good news, because *they did not believe the messenger*. "Oh!" said they, "stop a moment. What! a dinner to be given away? I don't believe it. What! the young Prince going to be married? Tell

that to fools, we don't believe any such thing. What! we all invited? We don't believe it; the story is incredible." The poor messenger went home and told his Master that they would not believe him. That is just another reason why many men make light of the gospel, because they don't believe it. "What!" they say, "Jesus Christ died to wash men from their sins? We don't believe it. What! A heaven. Who ever saw it? A hell! Who ever heard its groans? What! Eternity. Who ever returned from that last home of every spirit. What! Blessedness in religion? We don't believe it—it is a moping, miserable thing. What! Sweetness in the promises? No, there is not; we believe there is sweetness in the world, but we do not believe there is any in the wells the Lord has digged." And so they despise the gospel because they do not believe it. But I am sure, that when a man once believes it, he never thinks lightly of it. Once let me have the solemn conviction in my heart by the Holy Spirit, that if unsaved, there is a gaping gulf that shall devour me; do you think I can go to rest till I have trembled from head to foot? Once let me heartily believe that there is a heaven provided for those who believe on Christ, do you think I could give sleep to my eyes, or slumber to my eyelids, till I have wept because it is not mine? I believe not. But damnable unbelief thrusts his hand into the mouth of man, and plucks up his heart, and so destroys him, for it will not let him believe, and, therefore, he cannot feel because he believeth not. Oh! my friends, it is unbelief that makes men think lightly of Christ; but unbelief will not do so by-and-bye. There are no infidels in hell; they are all believers there. There are many that were infidels here, but they are not so now; the flames are too hot to make them doubt their existence. It is hard for a man, tormented in the flame, to doubt the existence of the fire. It would be difficult for a man, standing before the burning eyes of a God, to doubt the existence of a God after that. Ah! unbelievers, turn ye, or rather, may the Lord turn you from your unbelief, for this makes you think lightly of Christ; and this it is that is taking away your life, and destroying your souls.

Another set of people thought lightly of this feast *because they were so worldly*; they had so much to do. I have heard of a rich merchant who was waited on one day by a godly man, and when he stepped him, he said to him, "Well, sir, what is the state of your soul?" "Soul!" he said, "bother you, I have no time to take care of my soul; I have enough to do to take care of my ships." About a week after, it so happened that he had to find time to die, for God took him away. We fear he said to him, "Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast hoarded up for thyself?" Ye merchants of London, there are many of you who read your ledgers more than your Bibles. Perhaps you must, but ye do not read your Bibles at all, while ye read your ledgers every day. In America, it is said, they worship the almighty dollar; I believe that in London many men worship the almighty sovereign; they have the greatest possible respect for an almighty bank note; that is the God which many men are always adoring. The prayer-book they carry so religiously in their hands is their cash-book. Even on Sunday, there is a gentleman over there, he does not think his foreman knows it, but he was sitting in doors all this morning, because it was wet, casting up his accounts; and now he comes here in the evening, because he is a very pious man—extraordinarily so. He would shut the parks up on a Sunday, he would—he would not let a soul get a breath of fresh air, because he is so pious, but he himself may sit half-a-day in the counting-house and yet think it no sin. But many are too busy to think of these things. "Pray!" they say, "I have no time for that; I have to pay. What! read the Bible? No, I cannot; I have to be looking over this thing and that thing, and seeing how the markets go. I find time to read the *Times*, but I could not think of reading the Bible." It will be marvellously unfortunate for some of you, that you will find the lease of your lives rather shorter than you expected. If you had taken a lease of your lives for eighty-eight years from this date, you would be foolish enough, perhaps, to spend forty-four in sin. But considering that you are a tenant at will, and liable to be turned out any day, it is the height of folly, the very climax of absurdity, excelling all that the fool, with his cap and bells, ever did, to be living just to gather up the pelf of this world, and not for things to come. Worldliness is a demon that hath wrung the neck of many soul; God grant that we may not perish through our worldliness!

There is another class of people that I can only characterize in this way: *they are*

altogether thoughtless. If you ask them concerning religion, they have no opinion at all about it. They do not positively detest it, they do not mock at it; but they have not a thought about it. The fact of it is, they intend thinking about it by-and-bye. Theirs is a kind of butterfly existence; they are always moving about, never doing anything, neither for others or themselves. And these are very amiable people, who are always ready to give a guinea for a charity; they never refuse anybody, and they would give their guinea all the same, whether it was for a cricket match or a church. Now, if I were forced to go back to the world, and had to choose the character I would wish to be, the last position I would wish to occupy would be that of the thoughtless man. I believe thoughtless persons are in the most danger of being lost of any class I know. I like, sometimes, to get under the word a thoroughly stout, stiff, hater of the gospel, for his heart is like a flint, and when it is struck with the hammer of the gospel, the flint goes to pieces in a moment. But these thoughtless people have india-rubber hearts—you hit them, and they give way; you strike them again, and they give way. If they are sick, and you visit them, they say "yes." You talk to them about the importance of religion; they say "yes." You talk to them about escaping from hell and entering heaven, they say "yes." You preach a sermon to them when they are better, and remind them of the vows they made in their sickness; "it is quite right, sir," they say. And they say the same whatever you may tell them. They are always very polite to you; but whatever you say to them is put aside. If you begin talking to them about drunkards, oh! they are not drunkards; they may have accidentally got drunk once, but that was a little thing out of the usual way. And bring whatever sin you like to them, you may hit them, and hit them, but it is no good, for they are not half so easily broken (speaking after the manner of men) as the real stout hearted hater of the gospel. Why, there is a sailor comes rolling home from sea, swearing, blaspheming, cursing; he comes into the house of God, and almost the first word is applied by the Spirit for the breaking of Jack's heart. Another young man says, "I know as much as any minister can tell me, for my own mother taught me, and my old father used to read the Bible to me till, I believe, I have got every bit of it in my head. I go to chapel out of respect to his memory, but I really don't care at all about it; it is very good for old people, it is quite right for old women, and those who are dying, and in time of cholera. It is a very good thing, but I don't care anything about it just now." Now, I tell you, careless people, most solemnly, that you are the very devil's lifeguards; you are his reserve; he keeps you away from the battle; he does not send you out like he does a blasphemer, for he fears that a shot may haply light upon you, and you may be saved. But he says, "Stand by here, and if you have to go out, I will give you an impenetrable coat of mail." The arrows go rattling against you: they all hit you; but alas! there is not one of them that penetrates your heart, for that is left elsewhere. You are only an empty chrysalis, and when you come to God's house, and his word is preached, you make light of it, because it is your habit to be thoughtless about everything.

Very briefly I must touch another case, and then I must dismiss you. You may make light of the gospel *out of sheer presumption*. They are like the foolish man, who goes on, and is punished; not like the prudent man, who "foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself." They go on; that step is safe—they take it; the next step is safe—they take it; their foot hangs over a gulf of darkness; but they will try one step, and as that is safe, they think they will try the next; and as the last has been safe, and as for many years they have been safe, they suppose they always shall be; and because they have not died yet, they think they never will die. And so out of sheer presumption, thinking "all men mortal but themselves," they go on making light of Christ. Tremble, ye presumptuous, you will not always be able to do that.

And, lastly, I fear there are a great many who make light of Christ *because of the commonness of the gospel*. It is preached everywhere, and that is why you make light of it. You can hear it at the corner of every street; you can read it in this widely circulated Bible; and because the gospel is so common, therefore, you don't care for it. Ah! my dear friends, if there were only one gospel minister in London that could tell you the truth; if there were only one Bible in London, I believe you would be rushing to hear that Bible read; and the man who had the message would have no sinecure of it, he would be obliged to work from morning to night, to tell it out to

you. But now, because you have so many Bibles you forget to read them ; because you have so many tracts you pack up any article in them ; because you have so many sermons you do not think anything at all of them. But why is that ? Dost thou think the less of the sun because he scatters his beams abroad ? Dost thou think the less of bread because it is the food which God gives to all his children ? Dost thou think the less of water, when thou art thirsty, because every rill will afford it to thee ? No. If thou wert athirst after Christ, thou wouldst love him all the better, because he is preached everywhere ; and thou wouldst not think lightly of him because of that.

"They made light of it." How many of my hearers to-night, I ask again, are making light of Christ ? Many of you are, no doubt. I will give you, then, just one warning, and then farewell. Make light of Christ, sinner ! let me say again to thee, and thou wilt rue the day, when thou comest on thy death-bed. It will go hard with thee when the bony monster has got the grip of thee, and when he is bringing thee down the river, to steep thee in the lake of death. It will go hard with thee, when thy eye-strings break, and when thy death-sweat stands upon thy brow. Remember, last time thou hadst a fever ; ah ! how thou didst shake. Remember, last night, how thou didst quake in thy bed, when flash after flash of lightning came through thy window ; and how thou didst tremble when the deep-mouthed thunder spake out the voice of God. Ah ! sinner, thou wilt tremble worse then when thou shalt see death for thyself, and when the bony rider on his white horse shall grasp his dart and plunge it in thy bowels. It will go hard with thee then, if thou hast no Christ to shelter thee, no blood wherein to wash thy soul ! Remember, moreover, after death cometh the judgment. It will go hard with thee if thou hast despised Christ, and shalt die a despiser. See that flying angel ; his wings are made of flame, and in his hand he grasps a sharp two-edged sword. O angel, wherefore dost thou wing thy speedy flight ? "Hark !" says he, "this trumpet shall tell you." And he puts a trumpet to his lips, and

"Blows a blast so loud and dread,
Ne'er were prophetic sounds so full of woe."

Look ! the sheeted dead have started from their graves. Behold, the cloudly chariot is wheeled along by cherub's hand. Mark ! there upon the throne there sits the King—the Prince. O angel, what in this terrible day must become of the man that has thought lightly of Christ ? See there, he unsheathes his sword. "This blade," says he, "shall find and pierce him through. This blade, like a sickle, shall reap each tare from the wheat, and this strong arm shall bind him up in his bundle to be burned ; and this great hand of mine shall grasp him, and hurl him down, down, down, where flames for ever burn, and hell for ever howls." It will go hard with you then. Mark this man's word to-night ; go away and laugh at it ; but remember, I say to you again, it will be a solemn thing for you when Christ shall come to judgment, if you have made light of him, and worse than all, if you should ever be locked up in the caverns of despair, if you should ever hear it said, "Depart, ye cursed," if you should ever mingle your awful shrieks with the doleful howls of lost myriads, if you should see the pit that is bottomless, and the gulf that has walls of fire. It will be a fearful thing to find thyself in there, and to know that thou canst ne'er get out again ! Sinner, this night I preach the gospel to thee. E'er thou goest, hear it, and believe it ; may God grant thee grace to receive it, so thou shalt be saved. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved. He that believeth not," so saith the Scripture, "shall be damned." To believe, is to put your trust in Christ ; to be baptized, is to be plunged in water in the name of the Lord Jesus, as a profession that you are already saved, and that you love Christ. "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." O may you never know the meaning of that last word. Farewell.

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Spurgeon, Charles
Haddon
[six sermons]

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A MIGHTY SAVIOUR.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 4, 1857, BY THE

REV. C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

"Mighty to save."—Isaiah lxiii. 1.

This, of course, refers to our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who is described as "coming from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah," and who, when it is questioned who he is, replies, "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." It will be well, then, at the commencement of our discourse to make one or two remarks concerning the mysteriously complex person of the man and God whom we call our Redeemer, Jesus Christ our Saviour. It is one of the mysteries of the Christian religion, that we are taught to believe that Christ is God, and yet a man. According to Scripture, we hold that he is "very God," equal and co-eternal with the Father, possessing, as his Father doth, all divine attributes in an infinite degree. He participated with his Father in all the acts of his divine might; he was concerned in the decree of election, in the fashioning of the covenant; in the creation of the angels, in the making of the world, when it was wheeled from nothing into space, and in the ordering of this fair frame of nature. Before any of these acts the divine Redeemer was the eternal Son of God. "From everlasting to everlasting he is God." Nor did he cease to be God when he became man. He was equally "God over all, blessed for evermore," when he was "the man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, as before his incarnation." We have abundant proof of that in the constant affirmations of Scripture, and, indeed, also in the miracles which he wrought. The raising of the dead, the treading of the billows of the ocean, the hushing of the winds, and the rending of the rocks, with all those marvellous acts of his, which we have not time here to mention, were strong and potent proofs that he was God, most truly God, even when he condescended to be man. And Scripture, most certainly, teaches us that he is God now, that he shares the throne of his Father—that he sits high above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named," and is the true and proper object of the veneration, the worship, and the homage of all worlds. We are equally taught to believe that he is *man*. Scripture informs us that, on a day appointed, he came from heaven and did become man as well as God, taking upon himself the nature of a babe in the manger of Bethlehem. From that babe, we are told, he did grow to the stature of manhood, and became "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh," in everything except our sin. His sufferings, his hunger, above all, his death and burial, are strong proofs that he was man, most truly man; and yet it is demanded of us by the Christian religion, to believe, that while he was man he was most truly God. We are taught that he was a "child born, a son given," and yet, at the same time, the "Wonderful, the Counsellor, the

mighty God, the everlasting Father." Whosoever would have clear and right views of Jesus, must not mingle his natures. We must not consider him as a God diluted into deified manhood, or as a mere man officially exalted to the Godhead, but as being two distinct natures in one person; not God melted into man, nor man made into God, but man and God taken into union together. Therefore, do we trust in him, as the Daysman, the Mediator, Son of God, and Son of Man. This is the person who is our Saviour. It is this glorious, yet mysterious being, of whom the text speaks, when it says, he is mighty—"mighty to save."

That he is mighty we need not inform you; for as readers of the Scriptures you all believe in the might and majesty of the Incarnate Son of God. You believe him to be the Regent of providence, the King of death, the Conqueror of hell, the Lord of angels, the Master of storms, and the God of battles, and, therefore, you can need no proof that he is mighty. The subject of this morning is one part of his mightiness. He is "mighty to save." May God the Holy Spirit help us in briefly entering upon this subject, and make use of it to the salvation of our souls!

First, we shall consider *what is meant by the words "to save;"* secondly, *how we prove the fact that he is "mighty to save;"* thirdly, *the reasons why he is "mighty to save;"* and then, fourthly, *the inferences which are to be deduced from the doctrine that Jesus Christ is "mighty to save."*

I. First, then, WHAT ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND BY THE WORDS "TO SAVE?"

Commonly, most men, when they read these words, consider them to mean salvation from hell. They are partially correct, but the notion is highly defective. It is true Christ does save men from the penalty of their guilt; he does take those to heaven who deserve the eternal wrath and displeasure of the Most High; it is true that he does blot out "iniquity, transgression, and sin," and that the iniquities of the remnant of his people are passed over for the sake of his blood and atonement. But that is not the whole meaning of the words "to save." This deficient explanation lies at the root of mistakes which many theologians have made, and by which they have surrounded their system of divinity with mist. They have said that to save is to pluck men as brands from the burning—to save them from destruction if they repent. Now, it means vastly, I had almost said infinitely more than this. "To save" means something more than just delivering penitents from going down to hell. By the words "to save" I understand the whole of the great work of salvation, from the first holy desire, the first spiritual conviction onward to complete sanctification. All is done of God through Jesus Christ. Christ is not only mighty to save those who do repent, but he is able to make men repent; he is engaged not merely to carry those to heaven who believe, but he is mighty to give men new hearts and to work faith in them; he is mighty not merely to give heaven to one who wishes for it, but he is mighty to make the man who hates holiness love it, to constrain the despiser of his name to bend his knee before him, and to make the most abandoned reprobate turn from the error of his ways.

By the words "to save," I do not understand what some men say they mean. They tell us in their divinity that Christ came into the world to put all men into a salvable state—to make the salvation of all men possible by their own exertions. I believe that Christ came for no such thing—that he came into the world not to put men into a *salvable* state, but into a *saved* state; not to put them where they could save themselves, but to do the work in them and for them, from the first even to the last. If I believed that Christ came only to put you, my hearers, and myself into a state where we might save ourselves, I should give up preaching henceforth and for ever; for knowing a little of the wickedness of men's hearts, because I know something of my own—knowing how much men naturally hate the religion of Christ—I should despair of any success in preaching a gospel which I had only to offer, its effects depending upon the voluntary acceptance of it by unrenewed and unregenerate men. If I did not believe that there was a might going forth with the word of Jesus, which makes men willing in the day of his power, and which turns them from the error of their ways by the mighty, overwhelming, constraining force of a divine and mysterious influence, I should cease to glory in the cross of Christ. Christ, we repeat, is mighty, not merely to put men into a salvable condition, but mighty absolutely and entirely to

save them. This fact I regard as one of the grandest proofs of the divine character of the Bible revelation. I have many a time had doubts and fears, as most of you have had; and where is the strong believer that has not sometimes wavered? I have said, within myself, "Is this religion true, which, day after day, I incessantly preach to the people? Is it the correct one? Is it true that this religion has an influence upon mankind?" And I will tell you how I have reassured myself. I have looked upon the hundreds, nay, upon the thousands whom I have around me, who were once the vilest of the vile—drunkards, swearers, and such like—and I now see them "clothed and in their right mind," walking in holiness and in the fear of God; and I have said, within myself, "This must be the truth, then, because I see its marvellous effects. It is true, because it is efficient for purposes which error never could accomplish. It exerts an influence among the lowest order of mortals, and over the most abominable of our race. It is a power, an irresistible agent of good; who then shall deny its truth. I take it that the highest proof of Christ's power is not that he offers salvation, not that he bids you take it if you will, but that when you reject it, when you hate it, when you despise it, he has a power whereby he can change your mind, make you think differently from your former thoughts, and turn you from the error of your ways. This I conceive to be the meaning of the text: "mighty to save."

But it is not all the meaning. Our Lord is not only mighty to make men repent, to quicken the dead in sin, to turn them from their follies and their iniquities. But he is exalted to do more than that: he is mighty to keep them Christians after he has made them so, and mighty to preserve them in his fear and love, until he consummates their spiritual existence in heaven. Christ's might doth not lie in making a believer, and then leaving him to shift for himself afterwards; but he who begins the good work carries it on; he who imparts the first germ of life which quickens the dead soul, gives afterwards the life which prolongs the divine existence, and bestows that mighty power which at last bursts asunder every bond of sin, and lands the soul perfected in glory. We hold and teach, and we believe upon Scriptural authority, that all men unto whom Christ has given repentance must infallibly hold on their way. We do believe that God never begins a good work in a man without finishing it; that he never makes a man truly alive to spiritual things without carrying on that work in his soul even to the end, by giving him a place amongst the choirs of the sanctified. We do not think that Christ's power dwells in merely bringing me one day into grace, and then telling me to keep myself there, but in so putting me into a gracious state, and giving me such an inward life and such a power within myself that I can no more turn back than the very sun in the heavens can stay itself in its course, or cease to shine. Beloved, we regard this as signified by the terms "mighty to save." This is commonly called Calvinistic doctrine; it is none other than Christian doctrine, the doctrine of the holy Bible; for despite that it is now called Calvinism, it could not be so called in Augustine's days; and yet in Augustine's works you find the very same things. And it is not to be called Augustinism; it is to be found in the writings of the apostle Paul. And yet it was not called Paulism, simple for this reason, that it is the expansion, the fullness of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. To repeat what we have before said, we hold and boldly teach, that Jesus Christ is not merely able to save men who put themselves in his way and who are willing to be saved, but that he is able to make men willing—that he is able to make the drunkard renounce his drunkenness and come to him—that he is able to make the despiser bend his knee, and make hard hearts melt before his love. Now, it is ours to show that he is able to do so.

II. HOW CAN WE PROVE THAT CHRIST IS "MIGHTY TO SAVE?"

We will give you the strongest argument first; and we shall need but one. The argument is, that he *has* done it. We need no other; it were superfluous to add another. He *has* saved men. He has saved them, in the full extent and meaning of the word which we have endeavoured to explain. But in order to set this truth in a clear light, we will suppose the worst of cases. It is very easy to imagine, say some, that when Christ's Gospel is preached to some here who are amiable and lovely, and have always been trained up in the fear of God, they will receive the Gospel in the love of it. Very well, then we will not take such a case. You see this South Sea Islander. He has just been eating a diabolical meal of human flesh; he is a cannibal; at his belt are slung the scalps of men whom he has murdered, and

in whose blood he glories. If you land on the coast he will eat you too, unless you mind what you are after. That man bows himself before a block of wood. He is a poor ignorant debased creature, but very little removed from the brute. Now, has Christ's Gospel power to tame that man, to take the scalps from his girdle, to make him give up his bloody practices, renounce his gods, and become a civilised and Christian man? You know, my dear friends, you talk about the power of education in England; there may be a great deal in it; education may do very much for some who are here, not in a spiritual, but in a natural way; but what would education do with this savage: Go and try. Send the best schoolmaster in England over to him: he will eat him before the day is up. That will be all the good of it. But if the missionary goes with Christ's Gospel, what will become of him? Why, in multitudes of cases, he has been the pioneer of civilization, and under the providence of God has escaped a cruel death. He goes with love in his hands and in his eyes; he speaks to the savage. And mark ye, we are telling facts now, not dreams. The savage drops his tomahawk. Says he, "It is marvellous; the things that this man tells me are wonderful, I will sit and listen." He listens, and the tears roll down his cheeks; a feeling of humanity which never burned within his soul before is kindled in him. He says, "I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ;" and soon he is clothed and in his right mind," and becomes in every respect a man—such a man as we could desire all men to be. Now, we say, that this is proof that Christ's Gospel does not come to the mind that is prepared for it, but prepares the mind for itself; that Christ does not merely put the seed into the ground that has been prepared beforehand, but ploughs the ground too—ay, and harrows it, and does the whole of the work. He is so able to do all this. Ask our missionaries who are in Africa, in the midst of the greatest barbarians in the world—ask them whether Christ's Gospel is able to save, and they will point to the kraal of the Hottentot, and then they will point to the houses of the Kuraman, and they will say, "What has made this difference, but the word of the Gospel of Christ Jesus?" Yes, dear brethren, we have had proofs enough in heathen countries; and why need we say more, but merely to add this—we have had proofs enough at home. There are some who preach a gospel which is very well fitted to train man in morals, but utterly unfitted to save him, a gospel which does well enough to keep men sober when they are so, but not a gospel which makes men sober when they have become drunkards. It is a good thing enough to supply them with a kind of life, when they have it already, but not to quicken the dead and save the soul, and it can give up to despair the very characters whom Christ's Gospel was most of all intended to affect. I could a tale unfold of some who have plunged head-first into the blackest gulfs of sin, who would horrify you and me, if we could allow them to recount their guilt. I could tell you how they have come into God's house with their teeth set against the minister, determined that say what he would, might listen, but it would be to scoff. They stayed a moment; some word arrested their attention; they thought within themselves, "I will hear that sentence." It was some pointed, terse saying that entered into their souls. They knew not how it was, but they were spell-bound, and stood to listen a little longer; and by-and-bye, unconsciously to themselves, the tears began to fall, and when they went away they had a strange, mysterious feeling about them that led them to their chambers. Down they fell on their knees; the story of their life was all told before God; he gave them peace through the blood of the Lamb, and they went to God's house, many of them to say, "come and hear what God hath done for my soul," and to

"Tell to sinners round
What a dear Saviour they had found."

Remember the case of John Newton, the great and mighty preacher of St. Mary, Woolnoth,—an instance of the power of God to change the heart, as well as to give peace when the heart is changed. Ah! dear hearers, I often think within myself, "This is the greatest proof of the Saviour's power." Let another doctrine be preached: will it do the same? If it will, why not let every man gather a crowd round him and preach it. Will it really do it? If it will, then the blood of men's souls must rest upon the man who does not boldly proclaim it. If he believes his

gospel does save souls, how does he account for it that he stands in his pulpit from the first of January, till the last of December, and never hears of a harlot made honest, nor of a drunkard reclaimed? Why? For this reason, that it is a poor dilution of Christianity. It is something like it, but it is not the bold, broad Christianity of the Bible; it is not the full gospel of the blessed God, for that *has* power to save. But if they do believe that theirs is the gospel, let them come out to preach it, and let them strive with all their might to win souls from sin, which is rife enough God knows. We say again, that we have proof positive in cases—even here before us, that Christ is mighty to save even the worst of men—to turn them from follies in which they have too long indulged, and we believe, that the same gospel preached elsewhere would produce the same results.

The best proof you can ever have of God's being mighty to save, dear hearers, is that he saved *you*. Ah! my dear hearer, it were a miracle if he should save thy fellow that stands by thy side; but it were more a miracle if he should save thee. What art thou this morning? Answer! "I am an infidel," says one; "I hate and despise Christ's religion." But suppose, sir, there should be such a power in that religion that one day thou shouldst be brought to believe it! What wouldst thou say then? Ah! I know thou wouldst be in love with that gospel for ever; for thou wouldst say, "I above all men was the last to receive it; and yet here am I, I know not how, brought to love it." Oh! such a man when constrained to believe makes the most eloquent preacher in the world. "Ah! but" says another, "I have been a Sabbath-breaker upon principle, I despise the Sabbath, I hate utterly and entirely everything religious." Well, I can never prove religion to you to be true, unless it should ever lay hold of you, and make you a new man. Then you will say there is something in it. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." When we have felt the change it works in ourselves, then we speak of facts, and not of fancies, and we speak very boldly too. We say again, then, he is "mighty to save."

III. But now it is asked, WHY IS CHRIST "MIGHTY TO SAVE?" To this there are sundry answers.

First, if we understand the word "save" in the popular acceptance of the word, which is not, after all, the full one, though a true one—if we understand salvation to mean the pardon of sin and salvation from hell, Christ is mighty to save, *because of the infinite efficacy of his atoning blood*. Sinner! black as thou art with sin, Christ this morning is able to make thee whiter than the driven snow. Thou askest why. I will tell thee. He is able to forgive, because he has been punished for thy sin. If thou dost know and feel thyself to be a sinner, if thou has no hope or refuge before God but in Christ, then be it known that Christ is able to forgive, because he was once punished for the very sin which thou hast committed, and therefore he can freely remit, because the punishment has been entirely paid by himself. Whenever I get on this subject I am tempted to tell a story; and though I have told it times enough in the hearing of many of you, others of you have never heard it, and it is the simplest way I know of setting out the belief I have in the atonement of Christ. Once a poor Irishman came to me in my vestry. He announced himself something in this way: "Your reverence, I'm come to ax you a question." "In the first place," said I, "I am not a reverend, nor do I claim the title; and in the next place, why don't you go and ask your priest that question?" Said he, "Well, your riv—sir, I meant—I did go to him, but he did not answer me to my satisfaction exactly; so I have come to ask you, and if you will answer this you will set my mind at peace, for I am much disturbed about it." "What is the question?" said I. "Why, this. You say, and others say too, that God is able to forgive sin. Now, I can't see how he can be just, and yet forgive sin: for," said this poor man, "I have been so greatly guilty that if God Almighty does not punish me *he ought*; I feel that he would not be just if he were to suffer me to go without punishment. How, then, sir, can it be true that he can forgive, and still retain the title of just?" "Well," said I, "it is through the blood and merits of Jesus Christ." "Ah!" said he, "but then I do not understand what you mean by that. It is the kind of answer I got from the priest, but I wanted him to explain it to me more fully, how it was that the blood of Christ could make God just. You say it does, but I want to know how." "Well, then," said I, "I will tell you what I think to be the whole system of atonement, which I think is the sum and substance, the root, the marrow

and the essence of all the gospel. This is the way Christ is able to forgive. Suppose," said I, "you had killed some one. You were a murderer; you were condemned to die, and you deserved it." "Faith," said he, "yes, I should deserve it." "Well, her Majesty is very desirous of saving your life, and yet at the same time universal justice demands that some one should die on account of the deed that is done. Now, how is she to manage?" "Said he, "That is the question. I cannot see how she can be inflexibly just, and yet suffer me to escape." "Well," said I, "suppose, Pat, I should go to her, and say, 'Here is this poor Irishman, he he deserves to be hanged, your Majesty; I don't want to quarrel with the sentence, because I think it just: but, if you please, I so love him that if you were to hang me instead of him I should be very willing.' Pat, suppose she should agree to it, and hang me instead of you: what then? would she be just in letting you go?" "Ay," said he, "I should think she would. Would she hang two for one thing? I should say not. I'd walk away, and there isn't a policeman that would touch me for it," "Ah!" said I, "that is how Jesus saves." "Father," he said, "I love these poor sinners: let me suffer instead of them!" "Yes," said God, "thou shalt," and on the tree he died, and suffered the punishment which all his elect people ought to have suffered; so that now all who believe on him, thus proving themselves to be his chosen, may conclude that he was punished for them, and that therefore they never can be punished." "Well," said he, looking me in the face once more, "I understand what you mean; but how is it, if Christ died for all men, that notwithstanding some men are punished again? For that is unjust" "Ah!" said I, "I never told you that. I say to you that he has died for all who believe on him, and all who repent, and that was punished for their sins so absolutely and so really, that none of them shall ever be punished again." "Faith," said the man, clapping his hands, "that's the gospel; if it ins't, then I don't know anything, for no man could have made that up; it is so wonderful. Ah!" he said, as he went down the stairs, "Pat's safe now; with all his sins about him he'll trust in the man that died for him, and so he shall be saved." Dear hearer, Christ is mighty to save, because God did not turn away the sword, but he sheathed it in his own Son's heart; he did not remit the debt, for it was paid in drops of precious blood; and now the great receipt is nailed to the cross, and our sins with it, so that we may go free if we are believers in him. For this reason he is "mighty to save," in the true sense of the word.

But in the large sense of the word, understanding it to mean all that I have said it does mean, He is "mighty to save." How is it that Christ is able to make men repent, to make men believe, and to make them turn to God? One answers, "Why, by the eloquence of preachers." God forbid we should ever say that! It is "not by might nor by power." Others replying, "It is by the force of moral suasion." God forbid we should say "ay" to that; for moral suasion has been tried long enough on man, and yet it has failed of success. How does he do it? We answer, by something which some of you despise, but which nevertheless is a fact. He does it by the Omnipotent influence of his Divine Spirit. Whilst men are hearing the word (in those whom God will save) the Holy Spirit works repentance; he changes the heart and renews the soul. True, the preaching is the instrument, but the Holy Spirit is the great agent. It is certain that the truth is the means of saving, but it is the Holy Ghost applying the truth which saves souls. Ah! and with this power of the Holy Ghost we may go to the most debased and degraded of men, and we need not be afraid but that God can save them. If God should please, the Holy Spirit could at this moment make every one of you fall on your knees, confess your sins, and turn to God. He is an Almighty Spirit, able to do wonders. In the life of Whitfield, we read that sometimes under one of his sermons two thousand persons would at once profess to be saved, and were really so, many of them. We ask why it was. At other times he preached just as powerfully, and not one soul was saved. Why? Because in the one case the Holy Spirit went with the Word, and in the other case it did not. All the heavenly result of preaching is owing to the Divine Spirit sent from above. I am nothing; my brethren in the ministry around are all nothing; it is God that doeth everything. "Who is Paul, who is Apollos, and who is Cephas, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as God gave to every man." It must be "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Go forth, poor minister! Thou hast no power to preach with polished diction and

elegant refinement; go and preach as thou canst. The Spirit can make thy feeble words more mighty than the most ravishing eloquence. Alas! Alas! for oratory! Alas! for eloquence! It hath long enough been tried. We have had polished periods, and finely turned sentences; but in what place have the people been saved by them? We have had grand and gaudy language; but where have hearts been renewed! But now, "by the foolishness of preaching," by the simple utterance by a child of God's Word, he is pleased to save them that believe, and to save sinners from the error of their ways. May God prove his Word again this morning!

IV. The fourth point was, WHAT ARE THE INFERENCES TO BE DERIVED FROM THE FACT THAT JESUS CHRIST IS MIGHTY TO SAVE?

Why, first, there is a fact for ministers to learn—that they should endeavour to preach in faith, nothing wavering. "O God," cries the minister at times, when he is on his knees, "I am weak; I have preached to my hearers, and have wept over them; I have groaned for them; but they will not turn to thee. Their hearts are like the nether mill-stone; they will not weep for sin, nor will they love the Saviour." Then I think I see the angel standing at his elbow, and whispering in his ear, "Thou art weak, but he is strong; thou canst do nothing, but he is 'mighty to save.'" Bethink thyself of this. It is not the instrument, but the God. It is not the pen wherewith the author writes which is to have the praise of his wisdom or the making of the volume, but it is the brain that thinks it, and the hand that moves the pen. So in salvation. It is not the minister, it is not the preacher, but the God who first designs the salvation, and afterwards uses the preacher to work it out. Ah! poor disconsolate preacher, if thou hast had but little fruit of thy ministry, go on still in faith, remembering it is written, "My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Go on; be of good courage; God shall help thee; he shall help thee, and that right early.

Again, here is another encouragement for praying men and women, who are praying to God for their friends. Mother, you have been groaning for your son for many a year; he is now grown up and has left your roof, but your prayers have not been heard. So you think. He is as gay as ever; not yet has he made your breast rejoice. Sometimes you think he will bring your grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. It was but yesterday you said, "I will give him up, I will never pray for him again." Stop, mother, stop! By all that is holy and that is heavenly, stop! Utter not that resolution again; begin once more! Thou hast prayed over him; thou didst weep over his infant forehead, when he lay in his cradle; thou didst teach him when he came to years of understanding, and thou hast often warned him since; but all of no avail. Oh! give not up thy prayers; for remember, Christ is "mighty to save." It may be that he waits to be gracious, and he keeps thee waiting, that thou mayest know more of his graciousness when the mercy comes. But pray on. I have heard of mothers who have prayed for their children twenty years, ay; and of some who have died without seeing them converted, and then their very death has been the means of saving their children, by leading them to think. A father once had been a pious man for many years, yet never had he the happiness of seeing one of his sons converted. He had his children round his bed, and he said to them when dying, "My sons, I could die in peace, if I could but believe you would follow me to heaven; but this is the most sorrowful thing of all—not that I am dying, but that I am leaving you to meet you no more." They looked at him, but they would not weep, nor would they think on their ways. They went away. Their father was suddenly overtaken with great clouds and darkness of mind; instead of

dying peacefully and happily, he died in great misery of soul, but still trusting in Christ. He said, when he died, "Oh! that I had died a happy death, for that would have been a testimony to my sons; but now, O God, this darkness and these clouds have in some degree taken away my power to witness to the truth of thy religion." Well, he died, and was buried. The sons came to the funeral. The day after, one of them said to his brother, "Brother, I have been thinking, father was always a pious man, and if his death was yet such a gloomy one, how gloomy must ours be, without God and without Christ!" "Ah!" said the other, "that thought struck me too." They went to up to God's house, heard God's Word, they came home and bent their knee in prayer, and to their surprise they found that the rest of the family had done the same, and that the God who had never answered the father's prayer in his life had answered it after his death, and by his death too, and by such a death as would appear to be most unlikely to have wrought the conversion of any. Pray on, then, my sister; pray on, my brother! God shall yet bring thy sons and daughters to his love and fear, and thou shalt rejoice over them in heaven, it thou never dost on earth.

And finally, my dear hearers, there are many of you here this morning who have no love to God, no love to Christ; but you have a desire in your hearts to love him. You are saying, "Oh! can he save me? Can such a wretch as I be saved?" In the thick of the crowd there you are standing, and you are now saying within yourself, "May I one day sing among the saints above? May I have all my sins blotted out by blood divine?" Yes, sinner, he is "mighty to save;" and this is comfort for thee. Dost thou think thyself the worst of men? Does conscience smite thee as with a mailed fist, and does he say it is all over with thee; thou wilt be lost; thy repentance will be of no avail; thy prayers never will be heard; thou art lost to all intents and purposes? My hearer, think not so. He is "mighty to save." If thou canst not pray, he can help thee to do it; if thou canst not repent, he can give thee repentance; if thou feelest 'it hard to believe, he can help thee to believe, for he is exalted on high to give repentance, as well as to give remission of sins. O poor sinner, trust in Jesus; cast thyself on him. Cry, and may God help thee to do it now, the first Sabbath of the year; May he help thee this very day to cast thy soul on Jesus; and this will be one of the best years of all thy life. "Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Turn unto Jesus, ye wearied souls; come unto him, for lo he bids you come. "The Spirit and the bride say come; and let him that heareth say come; and whosoever will let him come and take of the water of life," and have Christ's grace freely. It is preached to you, and to all of you who are willing to receive it, it has been already given.

May God of his grace make you willing, and so save your souls, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour! Amen.

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